20c MAY 7, 1951

# New Republic

## Spring Books

**Letter from Paris** ***by Nicola Chiaromonte***

**Essay on Finnegan** ***by Nathan Halper***

***Reviews by:*** **DAVID GARNETT, NAOMI LEWIS**
**MAXWELL GEISMAR, M. L. ROSENTHAL**
**LOUISE BOGAN, DAVID DAICHES**
**HARVEY SWADOS**

***ANEURIN BEVAN'S BREAK***

***Its Meaning--Cable from London***

***Its Challenge--An Editorial***

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# What does the future hold?

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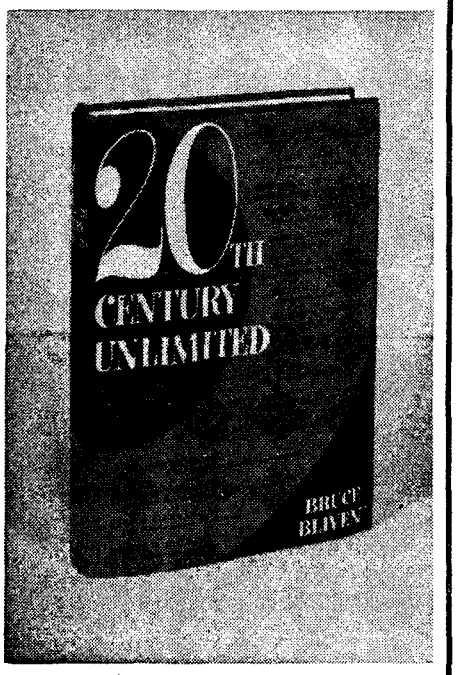
*EDITED BY BRUCE BLIVEN*

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New Republic

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EDITOR: Michael Straight
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR: Bruce Bliven
PUBLISHER: Daniel Mebane
ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Helen Fuller
ASSISTANT EDITOR: Elizabeth Huling
REPORTER: Jean Begeman
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS: Malcolm Cowley, John Farrelly, Harold L. Ickes, Joseph P. Lash, Max Lerner, James R. Newman, Gus Tyler
DEPARTMENTS: Robert Hatch (Chief), Cecil Smith (Music), Saul Carson (Radio and Television), Harold Clurman (Theatre), Lincoln Kirstein (Fine Arts)
COPY ASSISTANTS: Marjorie Stanley, Lucille Davis



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## WASHINGTON WIRE

GENERAL MACARTHUR comes down out of the clouds this week. The man whose word was law in Japan, who was a "mysterious presence" to most Americans, who hasn't held a press conference in five years and who dealt with the world imperially through Roy Howard or by communiqués to press associations, goes before a joint Senate committee for direct questioning. It is high time.

MacArthur is selling, essentially, the hope of a primrose path to victory. The Administration says the duel with Moscow must be long and hard; MacArthur and Taft say it can be easy and quick. Medicine Man MacArthur is telling the mothers and wives of soldiers in Korea that their men's lives are being sacrificed in vain—a cruel and reckless charge in time of war even for a general who must somehow find justification at all costs.

There is a streak of petulence about Bob Taft that is almost feminine. We have seen him flounce into his Senate seat and turn his back on an antagonist. These "pets" do not last long but while they do Taft is a reckless man. That was the mood in which he assailed the Joint Chiefs of Staff last week when needled by Sen. Brien McMahon (D, Conn.). He adopted the full McCarthy line in charging that the State Department, all along, wanted the Red Chinese to win. It was an extraordinary outburst, rather gratifying to some correspondents who have seen Taft do this privately and then deny later that he has taken such a position. The conservative Washington *Star*, shocked, called the Taft charges "reckless irresponsibility." We cannot be convinced that the nation wants that kind of man (in spite of certain admirable qualities) for President.

This is now the third great Chinese invasion wave coming against the UN. It will probably be stopped, then efforts will be made at a negotiated peace. There will be GOP clamor that this is "appeasement." It is not certain how far Acheson is still captive of his critics. There are already ominous rumblings from the Pentagon that we may bomb Chinese air bases after all. The theoretical answer to Taft-MacArthur is strong for continuing a limited war while we build up global defenses, but the temptation to take more drastic action may be irresistible if no solution is reached.

Here is the politics of the MacArthur row: Southern Democrats are rallying behind Truman. Eastern internationalist Republicans are deeply anxious over the stronger Taft line but aren't talking. Meanwhile Stassen, the forgotten boy of Philadelphia, manages to get into the act for a minute in the role of public peacemaker.

**On the inflation front** it seems evident that Congress isn't going to halt rising prices. Truman's economic message last week was one of the most interesting he has ever sent up; it was a last call for sacrifice. But Congress is on a sullen sit-down strike. It insists that we shall have guns—and butter, too—and since there isn't enough global butter it means inflation here and abroad. Naturally the British are restive. Defense Mobilizer Wilson has flown to London, which ought to do him good for he has shown but little understanding of the world problems.

Corporation profits are bounding. First quarter earnings are coming in—the highest on record, of course. Balky Congress wouldn't vote Truman's taxes. Corporate profits goad labor to demand higher wages. Meanwhile, defense expenditures absorb more and more of the national product. Suppose the US gross national product is a pie cut into 12 pieces; today only a single slice goes to defense but by the year-end it will be two slices and by the end of 1952 it will be three slices. That's when inflation, unless it is checked, will really take hold.

Sen. Margaret Chase Smith, the little

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lady from Maine, heads an elections subcommittee which, to everyone's surprise, is going to investigate the Ohio Taft-Ferguson election. Mrs. Smith owes nothing to the Taft-GOP leadership. She has done a fine job exploring the Tydings-Butler Maryland contest. Taft supporters have complained over labor's election tactics but their "demand" for an Ohio inquiry was rhetorical. Now they are going to get it anyway. Taft's managers admit spending two and two-thirds million to re-elect him and there was a covert GOP attack on Ferguson's religion. It will be a good show.

How many readers know that 22 state legislatures have lined up so far to ask Congress for a national convention to frame a constitutional amendment limiting federal income taxes to 25 percent? If 32 state legislatures approve the amendment, the convention has to be called. The two-term 22nd amendment was sneaked through while the public was almost unaware. Now comes the new drive. This is the "millionaires' amendment." The sole purpose is to shift the income-tax burden from the wealthy.

**The Senate** rejected, 45 to 39, a plan to decentralize Washington so that an atomic bomb would not leave America without a government. Sen. Harry Byrd (D, Va.) argued the plan would cost a lot of money and that the real solution was to hire fewer "unnecessary employees."

We watched our first atom bomb drill at kindergarten last week. The siren rang, the tots came out seriously into the corridor between classrooms. They were a cute bunch: the girls had flaxen hair, the boys, rosy cheeks. They accepted the idea of atomic destruction trustingly, unquestioningly. Who were they to ask why? They knelt, prostrated themselves, put curly heads in crooks of fat elbows, their little posteriors all rising. So the cavewoman's children crouched. So the ancients made obeisance to Moloch. We recommend the spectacle for parents; if one of those children is yours you may suddenly dimly comprehend total war.

*Washington* T.R.B.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### India's Crisis

SIR: I am glad to say that I find myself in general agreement with a large number of points made by Michael Straight in his articles on India.

To his report I would like to add that the present crisis in India is economic, social, political and also psychological. The people as well as the government suffer from a lack of sense of direction. . . . The sense of purpose achieved by the negative aspect of nationalism vanished with the attainment of independence and a void was created in its place. Positive nationalism giving the people new constructive objectives has failed to develop. The present leadership does not seem to be capable of giving a lead to the nation in this direction. They have been brought up in a tradition of negative and destructive criticism which puts the blame on someone else and is not used to self-introspection. . . .

To us the present American foreign policy appears to be unsatisfactory in several respects: (a) Americans display much nervousness in international affairs as contrasted with the cool British. Since the growing tension with Russia, Americans have become obsessed with Communism at home and abroad to a degree that seems to blind them to everything else. . . . (b) American foreign policy appears much too preoccupied in dealing with immediate tensions and neglects long-range considerations. . . . (c) America appears to be afraid of facing and shouldering the responsibilities of world leadership. When this was raised at the conference of the Institute of Pacific Relations the reaction of some American delegates was typical. They said, "America never desired the leadership of the world nor did she work for it. We want to live in co-operation with the other nations of the world." Willy-nilly America has been placed at the top of the world by events and she must act as the leader. . . . The responsibility of leadership cannot just be gotten out of by denying any desire for leadership.

Lastly, in regard to foreign economic aid to Asian countries. . . . When a nation, which with unprecedented generosity gives billions of dollars to Western Europe year after year, does not consider annual aid exceeding $50 million to Southeast Asia and undeveloped countries as a whole, the sight is puzzling to us, to say the least. . . .

*Poona, India* N. V. SOVANI

### A Yell for Douglas

SIR: Had I been present at the Tucson Rotary Club the day that Justice William O. Douglas gave his address on "A World in Revolution," I should have given a yell that would cause its greatest Saguaros to tremble and shake.

I am a thousand times grateful to the *New Republic* for publishing this address (March 12).

*Smethport, Pa.* JOSEPH G. MASTERS

### Mac for Mc

SIR: Here's the solution for what to do with General MacArthur. Let him run for Senator against McCarthy in Wisconsin, which is the General's official home state, next year. Even Mac is preferable to Mc.

*New York City* WILSON K. WILSON

### McCarthy's Gestapo

SIR: Since when does the *New Republic* indulge in stirring up racial prejudice? In "Washington Wire" (*NR*, April 23) I read that a "little Jewish printer" testified against Surine. Does the fact that the printer was Christian, Jew or Mohammedan have any bearing on the case?

*Dayton, Ohio* MRS. EMIL ROTHSTEIN

SIR: I am curious to know why . . . T.R.B. used the phrase "A scared little Jewish printer." Did he intend a particular or peculiar connotation to his thoughts on the Maryland-Butler article?

WILLIAM W. MANDELBAUM, D.D.S.
*Richmond Hill, N.Y.*

[We regret that these correspondents misinterpreted T.R.B.'s analogy. It was simply that the strong-arm technique used by Senator McCarthy's chief "investigator," Don Surine, was the same intimidation-by-threat-of-violence tactic used by Hitler's Gestapo. – THE EDITORS]

### Gratitude and Appreciation

SIR: I have just finished reading your editorial, "MacArthur's War Party" (*NR*, April 23). In these days of confusion and people with poor judgment expressing themselves so blatantly, words can never express the gratitude and appreciation I felt after reading your editorial. It is a relief to know that there are still some in this country who are uninfluenced by politics and are willing to tell the truth as nearly as possible. I hope that you will continue in this good work. Thanks.

*Lexington, Ky.* JOHN C. BROWN

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New Republic

# THE CHALLENGE OF ANEURIN BEVAN

RAMSAY MACDONALD almost broke the British Labour Party in pursuit of his own aims. Aneurin Bevan seems to be pursuing a similar course toward the same sterile end.

The trade unionists and socialists who built the Labour Party have condemned the manner and spirit of Bevan's rebellion. We think they are right. His approach is ultra-socialist at a time when socialism has little more to offer. It is ultra-nationalist when internationalism is our crying need. It is neutralist when the safety of all lies in a union of democracies. It is doctrinaire and defeatist when leadership calls for inspired realism.

Yet we should remember that labor in Britain has traditionally opposed great armaments. We should remind ourselves that the meat ration in Britain amounts to one chop a week. We should not blind ourselves to what is true in Bevan's indictment. We should take seriously his warning that "the very dramatic nature of this resignation might cause even some of our American friends to think before it is too late."

**Living standards** in Britain and throughout Western Europe are close to the margin of subsistence. Rearmament is pressing against civilian needs. The shortage of raw materials, needed for armaments and for consumption, is an urgent threat. The Economic Survey for 1951, published by the British Government, states:

> The shortage of raw materials is indeed much the most serious of all the difficulties with which the United Kingdom is likely to be faced in the immediate future.

It concludes:

> At best we face in the immediate future a decline in the rate of increase in the national output, a worsening of the balance of payments, a fall in the supplies of some consumer goods and a continuing rise in prices.

These are prospects that Americans also face. Yet our rearmament follows a time in which we have taken a rapidly growing share of the world's available raw materials, and it has been carried out without due consideration for the economies of our allies.

In 1939, for example, we took 15 percent of the world's total trade in copper. In 1949, before rearmament began, we took 24 percent. In 1939 we imported 42 percent of the world's production of tin; in 1949 we took 61 percent of all production. Rearmament greatly increased our purchases. Today we take 55 percent of the world's production of copper; 65 percent of the world's production of tin; 43 percent of the world's production of natural rubber; 33 percent of the world's production of cotton and 24 percent of the world's production of wool. At the best of times, our domination of world markets makes the position of smaller buyers precarious. Recently our wild military procurement intensified by outrageous profiteering by primary producers has upset all balance. Wool was carried up from $1.76 a pound in June, 1950, to over $4 and is $3.80 today. Cotton rose from 33 cents a pound before Korea to its present frozen price of 45 cents. Tin increased from 76 cents a pound before Korea to $2 a pound. Natural rubber which was selling at 17 cents a pound a year ago is 63 cents today.

These price increases are cited by Bevan as proof that American capitalism is "unable to restrain itself at all." That, of course, is a wholly false conclusion. Bevan's additional charge that our stockpiling program "denies to Great Britain even the means of carrying on civil production" is equally unjust, the people of Britain know. Britain supports our rearmament. Yet she fears with some reason that our government has acquiesced in a system of priorities in which our rearmament program comes first; our civilian needs come next; the rearmament of our allies comes third, and their civilian requirements come last. It is true that we have frozen wages and prices, and that we have placed curbs on non-essential uses of raw materials. Nevertheless an attitude of America first is implicit in Charles Wilson's report, "Building America's Might."

In general we have not cut strategic exports to our allies. Their complaint is that we have shown no concern for their rising needs. In many cases we have acted selfishly. We have rationed cotton for the rest of the world by export licenses, and left domestic consumption free of all restraints. We have adopted no controls on sulphur, vital to Britain, leaving rationing up to the manufacturers who discriminate against consumers overseas. While newspapers in Europe are held to a few pages, and the free press of Asia is threatened with extinction for lack of newsprint, 64-page editions of

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American newspapers pour out, loaded with full-page advertisements for bargains in furs. The purpose of our defense program may be international. Its manner is highly nationalist. Bevan's attack upon it is sterile, because it is advanced in the name not of an enlightened partnership, but of an even more narrow and selfish nationalism.

To heed Bevan's warning means, first, to reaffirm American internationalism, second, to implement a united defense program of the democracies.

American internationalism has been under attack, first, from the febrile isolationism of Taft, now from the vainglorious chauvinism of MacArthur. It must be restated in positive terms. That restatement lies, first, in the transfer of direction of the mobilization program to men who will carry through expansion of production, restriction of non-essential consumption and fair allocation of materials, and next in the passage of the $10 billion foreign-aid program that is now overdue in its presentation to a hostile Congress.

A unified defense program, as we have stated over and over, means, first, the declaration by the democracies that they will pool their resources in a common struggle, next, the creation of adequate combined boards to implement this concept.

In the Washington Conference of October, 1948, Britain and America agreed on an ambitious program of common economic action. Almost nothing has been done. When Prime Minister Attlee visited President Truman, combined action on procurement of raw materials was his principal plea. It has not been carried out. Instead, we led in the creation of the International Materials Conference. On its nine commodity committees, many nations meet today in an effort to reach voluntary agreements. Meanwhile the partners of the North Atlantic Alliance bid against each other in supplying what is supposed to be a unified armed force.

Unified procurement for the North Atlantic armies is the first step. Unified procurement for stockpiling and vital civilian needs might come next. A unified system of allocating the raw materials of the free nations is harder to achieve. In the last war an effective worldwide allocations system was operated by Britain and America through the combined boards in Washington. It was enforced through the wartime blockade that we established, and the worldwide monopoly of shipping that we controlled. These powers are not present today.

A third major problem is the allocation of America's economic aid. The first priority must be to areas such as Italy and Asia where it is needed to put idle resources to work to raise production. The next priority is to nations where morale is low and defense is inadequate today. That may mean that some nations like France are rewarded for their weakness while others like Britain are penalized because they are strong. That is the price of collective security and as long as there is a rough equality of effort a sense of justice should prevail. Of course rearmament will check the rise in living standards among all free peoples. It need not dangerously depress them. Neutralists, Communists, defeatists and irresponsible men may assert that America is rearming at Europe's expense. The truth is that under today's programs our living standards will suffer more through rearmament than those of any other free people. Since we can best afford the cost of defense that is as it should be.

## THE PRESIDENT'S COMPROMISE

THE PRESIDENT'S special message to Congress of April 26, recommending the extension and amendment of the Defense Production Act, was uncritical, uninspired and compromising. It leaned over backwards in a weak attempt to appease the farm bloc and get them to go along with the program.

Pointing out that "the hardest part of the job still lies ahead" and that "the full range of powers included in the Defense Production Act will be needed . . . until we are 'over the hump' in our defense mobilization program," the President evaluated in broad terms the progress we have made toward defense production and economic stabilization thus far, and called on the Congress to:

1. Extend the Act for two years, till June 30, 1953;
2. Authorize the government to build and operate defense plants, where necessary;
3. Permit the use of differential subsidies to obtain essential production from high cost sources of supply without increasing price ceilings;
4. Provide for controls over credit on existing houses, and regulation of speculative trading on the commodity exchanges;
5. Allow the parity price for each farm commodity, as of the beginning of its marketing season, to be used for price control purposes throughout that season;
6. Provide stronger means to enforce price control regulations; and

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7. Authorize effective control over both residential and commercial rents wherever needed.

The recommendations for extending the Act, for credit controls on existing housing, for regulation of speculative commodity trading, for stronger enforcement of price control, and for effective rent control on both residential and commercial properties are self-explanatory, forthright and adequate. The unexpected request for authority to build and operate defense plants implies that big business is dragging its heels on needed plant expansion—in spite of free-handed grants of certificates of necessity for accelerated amortization—and makes one wonder whether the President is covering up a serious lag in expansion of capacity in some vital industry. Differential subsidies to bring in the output of high-cost marginal mines without raising prices on the entire output are desperately needed. One wonders, however, why these could not already have been inaugurated under Section 303 (a) and (b) of the existing Act. The most important recommendation, however, is that relating to farm parity prices.

The President might have called for abandonment of the parity price principle for the duration of the emergency; or for the freezing of existing farm prices, with subsidies to yield farmers the equivalent of parity prices for those commodities still below parity. What he proposed instead was the retention of a moving parity price for farm products, with a slower rate of motion than the monthly adjustment we now have. Those farm prices still below parity would be permitted to rise, contributing to the inflationary spiral. While the President's proposal would somewhat improve the present situation, it is a far cry from the more vigorous action which is needed. Like most measures of appeasement, it will probably elicit from the farm bloc an attack just as savage as would have resulted from a more satisfactory recommendation.

# THE WEEK

## AEC SEGREGATES

The Atomic Energy Commission has yielded to the Southern tradition of segregation at its new installations now under construction in South Carolina and Kentucky. The result: increasing friction between white and Negro residents of the communities and wasted manpower in the defense program.

The 250,000-acre area acquired by the government in South Carolina is located in Aiken and Barnwell counties. Since virtually half the population in those counties is Negro, many are sacrificing property and homes to make way for the project. Construction of the plant will require at least 30,000 workers, and skilled Negroes should make up a large part of the labor force. However, when the Senate Banking and Currency Committee held hearings in Aiken last February, witness after witness proposed segregated playgrounds, schools and even jail cells for the anticipated influx of workers assigned to the project.

In Kentucky, the new plant will be located near Paducah. Clarence Mitchell, director of the Washington office of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, who recently visited both Aiken and Paducah, found cases of rank discrimination in the local employment service. Over 400 persons had been referred by the employment offices to specialized jobs on the plant site in Paducah. Not one was a Negro. When skilled Negro electricians tried to see hiring officials at the plant, guards informed them that jobs were open only to members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (AFL). When they tried to join the union, they were turned down. Negro bricklayers were given similar treatment.

The AEC says that segregation practices differ considerably at the three government-owned atomic energy communities. At Los Alamos, N. Mex., there is an announced non-segregation policy. At Richland, Washington, there is non-segregation among government employees; however, separate barracks are maintained for white and Negro construction workers. At Oak Ridge, Tenn., segregation is practised to a considerable extent. The pattern of segregation has been in effect in that community since it was established by the Army Engineers. The AEC administration building at Oak Ridge is operated on a completely integrated basis, but the plants operated by private contractors there are segregated. The AEC points out that although the land at Oak Ridge is owned by the federal government, applicable state and local laws are enforced by the regular state and local authorities.

The Atomic Energy Commission has followed a policy of integrating the life of its project towns into the pattern of surrounding communities. In the case of these new installations in Southern towns, the AEC has an obligation as an agency of the federal government to do much more. The AEC has an opportunity in these communities to improve conditions for Negroes and reverse local attitude and custom.

## CALIFORNIA LOYALTY

*LOS ANGELES, CALIF. (NR corresp.)*

The controversy over the University of California's loyalty oath is still far from ended despite the fact that the state's District Court of Appeals recently ruled that any more inclusive test than the standard pledge to support the Constitution would be "the forerunner of tyranny and oppression." The university's Board of Regents was urged

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by faculty and alumni groups to cease further litigation. But pressure from the state legislature, goading the regents to appeal the decision to a higher court, was to be reckoned with. In a flurry of parliamentary procedure last week, the regents voted 12 to 9 to abide by the court verdict that invalidated the oath, but they left the way open to reverse that decision at their next meeting or to appeal the court ruling as private citizens.

The court made short shrift of the regents' argument that the constitutional provision requiring no "oath, declaration or test" other than the pledge to support the state and federal constitutions is not applicable to the faculty because they do not hold office or positions of public trust. The court held:

> It goes without saying, that in the practical conduct of the affairs of the university the burden of so preserving it free from sectarian and political influence must be borne by the faculty as well as by the regents.
>
> Hence, if the faculty of the university can be subjected to any more narrow test of loyalty than the constitutional oath . . . our great institution now dedicated to learning and the search for truth [would be] reduced to an organ for the propagation of the ephemeral political, religious, social and economic philosophies, whatever they may be, of the majority of the Board of Regents of that moment.

The clarity and weight of that judicial opinion struck at the heart of loyalty oaths invoked by other state universities across the nation, wherever a political denial as a condition of employment has been tagged on to the affirmative constitutional pledge. Six schools now require faculty loyalty oaths—the Universities of North Carolina, Maine, Michigan, New Hampshire, Pittsburgh (Pa.) and Smith College.

## McCARRAN'S NEW COURT

Three members of the Subversive Activities Control Board last week started down the long and treacherous road which will lead to enforcement of the Internal Security Act of 1950 to find themselves overshadowed by the figure of Sen. Pat McCarran (D, Nev.) who has arrogated to himself a new and dangerous form of veto power. Not content with seeing the sweeping "control" law on the books, McCarran has reserved the power to intimidate the board members by refusing to allow his Senate Judiciary Committee to pass on their nominations.

The board panel, led by liberal Charles LaFollette, former Republican Representative from Indiana, is thus harassed in establishing the standards of fair procedure and objective decorum which are essential if the law is not to make a hollow mockery of American justice. The Communists, who are defending themselves against the charge of Soviet domination in this first case before the board, were quick to point out the board's own weakness. Their lawyer, Vito Marcantonio, claimed that the board was itself "in jeopardy."

Nominations to the five-man board were sent to Congress by President Truman on February 12, after they were ignored last session. Five days later McCarran created a subcommittee to which were named the most reactionary members of the Judiciary Committee, known as the most anti-liberal standing committee in the Senate. On it are McCarran, Jenner (Ind.), Eastland (Miss.), Ferguson (Mich.), Watkins (Utah), Smith (N.C.) and O'Connor (Md.). So far the committee has displayed no concern about the nominations in its file.

## PLAYING WITH HOT OIL

The lingering crisis centered about the disputed Iranian oil is likely to lead to a rapid showdown, now that Mohammed Mossadegh, the outspoken leader of the National Front, has assumed the premiership. After decades of personal agitation against the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company as leader of a small parliament faction, Mossadegh is succeeding the moderate Hussein Ala, who quit after the nationalist-dominated oil commission suddenly came out for quick expropriation of the British-owned company. True to revolutionary precedent, the Jacobins have taken over the helm. But it remains to be seen if Mossadegh can convert his followers from oppositionist to constructive policies. His uncompromising challenge to British power will have to rest on more than inflammatory oratory if Iran is not to be dragged to ruin in the course of the conflict.

The British, once again torn between their socialist and imperialist heritages, have kept an uneasy official silence, which was precipitately broken in the course of the weekend's change of pace. The Foreign Office's announcement that a British squadron was sailing toward Iran to "protect British lives and property" would once have chilled the ambitions of powers far mightier than Iran. But today the British cannot resort to colonial policies. Once again they will have to make sacrifices in favor of statesmanship. They can bargain, but not over the inevitable.

The key to a solution, as pressed by the US in behind-the-scenes talks, is that nationalization be accepted but that the company be allowed to operate the properties under a new agreement, which might provide for larger royalties to Iran but would not radically alter either production or distribution. US interest is acute. The Abadan refinery, the largest in the world, produces over five percent of world production. Cut off from their biggest supplier, the British might be forced to draw upon production from their Venezuelan properties, which would in turn cause shortages in the US.

US policy may not be following one straight line. The State Department is seeking to persuade the British that sacrifices are necessary. At the same time Washington defense authorities have been urging American oil companies to pool their Near Eastern resources for a possible crisis. But some of the companies are independently seeking a good thing out of the British dilemma. Independents led by Texas' Ryan Oil Company and represented by ex-Senator Millard Tydings have openly asked the Iraq Government to cancel its concession to the British Iraq Petroleum Company in their favor. And Socony-Vacuum and Jersey Standard, who have previously sought Iranian concessions, are reported galvanized into new activity there.

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# OUTSIDE AMERICA

## EUROPE SINCE MacARTHUR

Several hours before the replacement of General MacArthur was announced in Washington, the Paris newspaper *Ce Soir*, second only to *l'Humanite* as an official organ of the French Communist Party, spread in bold-face type across the top of eight columns on its front page the exultant scare headline: "MacArthur-Truman Agreement."

This was only one of many clear indications that the news of the dismissal of MacArthur took the Western European Communists by surprise. There were also plain signs that the surprise was far from pleasant, for the steadily growing Western European dislike of MacArthur and MacArthurism had become the best card in the Communist propaganda deck. *Ce Soir*, for example, had to resort to some specially devious tricks of exculpation in the issue published immediately after the announcement. A front-page editorial argued that though "the dismissal of MacArthur constitutes a victory of the forces of peace over the forces of war," everything suggested that the step was taken not because President Truman had been "converted" to faith in peace through diplomatic negotiation, but because he wanted to strengthen "American preparations for war in Europe." Nothing adequately evil could be raked up about General Ridgway, but General Van Fleet was called "the executioner of Greece."

The fact that the Western European Communists are worried by the effect of MacArthur's dismissal on public opinion was clearly confirmed in *l'Humanite* the morning after the announcement. Since opinion generally favors the development, the Communist organ had to call it "an important success." But this much admitted, there was an angry insistence on the argument that Truman was "forced" to take the action and that it really strengthened rather than weakened America's "war-mongering." The rest of the editorial was a plea to "the forces of peace" to avoid being "fooled" and to continue their efforts to defeat the "Washington gangsters."

In the non-Communist press, on the other hand, the news was greeted with satisfaction, ranging from the enthusiastic to the grudging variety. No single step taken by Washington since the intervention in Korea was so universally welcomed (though with varying degrees and kinds of pleasure) by all political parties and all shades of political opinion. The non-party newspaper *France-Soir* which has the largest circulation in Paris put the general view in clear, if brutal language:

> The abscess has been lanced. . . . The mortgage which MacArthur's rather too personal policy imposed on the whole range of American policy, as well as on United Nations action and on the unity of the three great Western allies, has been removed.

The Count of Paris, pretender to the throne of France, implicitly approved the dismissal of MacArthur, and said:

> It would be disastrous to be dragged politically beyond the limits fixed by the United Nations in June, 1950, by the requirements of military techniques.

The most important conservative newspaper, *Le Figaro*, wrote:

> The resolute gesture of President Truman honors a democratic nation. . . . It shows that in a great democracy everything must be subordinated to the respect for law and to the political principles established by the responsible government.

The Gaullist *l'Aurore* for once took a stand not very different from the vigorously anti-Gaullist, anti-Communist Left *Franc-Tireur*. In the latter newspaper, Charles Ronsac wrote:

> The dismissal of MacArthur is, after the return of Marshall to the Defense Department and the naming of Eisenhower to command of the Atlantic forces, the greatest European decision made by Truman since the start of the war in Korea. Thus Truman has already won two battles, and it remains for him to win the third—in Asia. . . . We should not wait passively for the reactions of Peking or Moscow. We should instead undertake firmly, but calmly, without a spirit of appeasement at any cost, but with the will to succeed, the new negotiations which the uncompromising spirit of MacArthur made impossible. . . .

The *Monde* of Paris, the most influential newspaper in France, wrote:

> From now on, the United States and the United Nations will no longer have any excuse for not defining clearly both their military and their political aims. . . . If this lack resulted primarily from British opposition to MacArthur, it is to be hoped now that it will be rapidly removed. If we want to negotiate, we must first know exactly what we want. We can, moreover, expect that the departure of MacArthur will facilitate the negotiations.

The *Monde* has recently been moving slowly away from its previously vigorous neutralist position. But the editorial of the *Monde* concludes on a note not very far from the one in *Ce Soir*; it stresses not so much the removal of a source of disagreement among the Atlantic allies, as the presence of other disagreements.

It appears that the new "line" of the neutralists is a modern political version of Oliver Twist's "more." The Communists wanted a continuation of the Truman-MacArthur dispute, on the assumption that it helped the basic Stalinist policy of driving wedges between the Atlantic allies. Now that the dispute has ended—and in a fashion that is generally recognized as calling for high political courage on the part not only of Truman but also of the American Government as a whole—the stress of the neutralists is not on the bridges between the allies but on the remaining gaps between them.

**If it is true** that there no longer is any excuse for the failure of the United States and the United Nations to define clearly both their military and political aims, it is also true that there is much less excuse for the neutralists to cling to a negative critical opposition. The boldness and courage of the step taken in the Pacific theatre calls at least for sincerity, honesty and above all practical, affirmative clarity on the part of America's critics in the countries of the Atlantic community.

*Paris* PERCY WINNER

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# BEVIN AND NOW—BEVAN

by Michael Curtis

THE POSITION of the British Labour Government is looking far from healthy at this moment. Not since 1931 has the outlook for socialism seemed so black. Torn by internal rivalries and plagued by the relentless pressure of a lively and superconfident opposition, the Labour Party is in no shape to face the future as it did so proudly in 1945. During the last three months, public opinion has swung sharply to the Right and Dr. Gallup is recording a 12-point lead for the Conservatives. A general election now would almost certainly result in a clear majority of some 200 seats for Winston Churchill.

The flood waters of rearmament and rising world commodity prices are at last spilling over the elaborate dike of economic controls which has been so effective in holding back the cost of living in Britain since the war. Fuel supplies are still short. The meat ration remains diminutive. The scarcity of raw materials—particularly of sulphur—threatens a short work week and even unemployment in a number of vital industries. In England, spring has been a little late this year, and such a winter of discontent leaves even the most loyal socialists pessimistic and uncertain.

Labor has survived similar setbacks in the past. After devaluation of the sterling, for instance, the public-opinion polls showed that the Tories would have romped home. But the tide turned and there are some who think it will do so again.

A month ago Ernest Bevin died. He had long been a sick man and his death was not altogether unexpected. But the passing of this elder statesman of the labor movement was bound to have a profound effect on the leadership of the party.

For nearly 20 years all the important decisions have been taken by an "inner cabinet" of four men—Clement Attlee, Ernest Bevin, Herbert Morrison and Sir Stafford Cripps. Through their personalities and by virtue of the offices which they held—Cripps, the middle-class intellectual, Bevin, the great labor-union leader, Morrison, the party "boss," and Attlee, the unobtrusive but highly effective chairman—these four men combined in a remarkable way to establish the strength of modern British socialism. It was leadership by committee. But the committee was compact enough and united enough to work.

Now Bevin is gone. Cripps is a desperately sick man and has retired from politics altogether. Morrison has moved from his key position as leader of the House of Commons to become Foreign Secretary, and even Attlee's broadcast tribute to his old colleague was made from a hospital sick bed.

The familiar power vacuum had been created. The age-old political dilemma presented itself: who will fill it? The problem of Cripps's successor seemed already settled. Hugh Gaitskell, Oxford don and wartime civil servant, made a good impression with his first budget speech last month. By ability, class and background he is perfectly fitted to carry on the Cripps tradition. But there was no obvious successor to Ernest Bevin, "the workingman's John Bull" as Churchill once called him. There was no one who, with a single pound of his massive fist, could rally the huge block of votes of the trade unions at a party conference. The best of Britain's union leaders today are helping to run the socialized industries. Those who have turned politicians are mainly the "safe" men, able enough in their own field but without the vital spark of leadership.

One man, and one man only, could have conceivably filled the bill and he, by deliberate calculation, has refused to associate himself with what he evidently considers to be a bankrupt concern. That man was Bevin's near namesake, Aneurin Bevan, architect of Britain's Health Service, Minister of Labor, and now, dramatically and unexpectedly, a plain back-bench MP.

**The political sensation** in Britain caused by Bevan's resignation has been almost equal to the excitement in America over MacArthur's dismissal. Its long-term significance may be nearly as great. It was at first thought that Bevan was proposing to walk out in a fit of personal pique. Superficially, the row began over Hugh Gaitskell's budget last month which had been generally favorably received by the Labour Party. But it contained one clause which infuriated the former Minister of Health. A limit had to be set to the enormous cost of the Health Service and Gaitskell proposed that half the price of dentures and spectacles should be borne by the patient. Bevan did his utmost to stop this. He even publicly threatened resignation. Gaitskell stood firm and for a time it looked as if Bevan would think better of his threat.

In fact as his letter of resignation reveals, the conflict ran deeper. Its origins can be traced to reports (which appeared in the American press six months ago) that a group of socialist ministers were opposing the pace of rearmament. Bevan, who himself inspired the story,

Michael Curtis is a staff member of the independent liberal British newspaper, the "News Chronicle."

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later denied its accuracy. There can be no doubt, however, that he has always felt very strongly that the fight against Communism would never succeed by expanding military expenditure to a point at which social justice would be threatened. He has therefore emphasized that his resignation was only partly due to the new charges for dentures and spectacles. He now attacks the very fundamentals of the government's policy of rearmament and co-operation with the United States.

**The challenge** is a formidable one. Given Bevan's skill at maneuver, Attlee, harassed and tired, may survive in the lobbies of the House of Commons only to be frozen out in the hearts of many working-class voters. For Bevan's tactic will clearly be to keep the government's precarious hold in Parliament while he weakens the leadership which he considers to be already discredited in the country. He will abstain on specific votes on which his group might be held responsible for bringing down the government. He will campaign on general issues on which he can voice what discontent and doubt there is in Britain. Then when Labour is defeated in an election he can say simply—"I told you so." Knowing this the national committees of the Labour Party and the Trade Union Congress have denounced his action, and the Labour Party chairman, Alice Bacon, has termed it "treachery." To these groups, loyalty to the party is basic at all times, whatever disagreements may arise.

What kind of man is this who has risked a brilliant political future at such a critical moment in the fortunes of his party?

A Welshman, he has a native instinct for oratory and his love of the flashing phrase has often gotten him into trouble. But the same quality has always endeared him to the rank-and-file of his own party. In the annual "primary" elections when the local labor groups elect their central party executive, "Nye" Bevan has polled more votes than any other socialist leader for six years in succession. A miner's son, and for a brief period a miner himself, he knows the meaning of poverty and unemployment. In his youth he was handicapped by a severe stutter. He cured himself by reading aloud on the Welsh mountains. "I went to the moon with H. G. Wells," he said, "and it was the outside world which seemed unreal."

Bevan is a self-educated man, but his was also unquestionably the acutest brain on the government front bench. He was almost the only member of the Cabinet who found time to study socialism as an evolutionary political philosophy. He realizes that it has outgrown Karl Marx, and knows it is the very antithesis of Soviet Communism.

This last is important. Though Bevan loves to pose as the dashing Prince Rupert of the radical Left, he no longer has any illusions about Communism. The Communists know it and dislike him nearly as much as the Tories do. Bevan's unofficial mouthpiece is the socialist periodical *Tribune,* and in foreign affairs this paper has pursued a consistently realistic line which is very far removed from the Vichyite flavor of its larger and more influential rival, the *New Statesman and Nation.*

There are some who regard Bevan as no more than a brilliant and unprincipled opportunist. It has even been suggested that he might one day lead the Conservatives if it suited his purpose. That is a superficial view. There was a time when he played with Tory fire in the shape of no less a person than Lord Beaverbrook. But his fingers were badly burned and he quickly learned his lesson.

The strength of Bevan's socialism today is that it springs from intellectual as well as emotional convictions. He believes passionately that freedom in the modern world will never be safe unless it is based on socialist democracy. He has no faith in the halfway house. As he said recently, "It may be that we are moving toward an eclectic society; we are not going to have a monolithic society. We are not going to socialize every barber's shop. But we must have a society in which democratic institutions and the elected representatives

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of the people have their hands on the levers of economic power and where the massive movements of economic affairs are under central direction and control. Unless that happens democracy itself will perish. . . . If government by discussion is infertile then men who think with their blood come on the scene."

Another of Bevan's favorite sayings is that "socialism is the language of priorities." Full employment, he argues, demands national planning:

When you have large masses of unemployed people they discharge . . . the same task as Lecky said the prostitutes did for their virtuous sisters. So long as they are there you do not have to make a plan. . . . They can be taken down off the shelf if you have got the impulse to build a new house, or a new office, or a new water main. They are always there, exempting you from the burden of moral choice. But when they are all at work and you want to do something more than you were doing . . . you can only do it at the expense of something else. In other words, as soon as we reach that situation the ordinary man or woman is called into consultation, and is asked to decide what he himself would put first in the national order of things. . . .

You have got to make a decision about values. You have to say what you consider to be most important, and a decision as to how to deploy the national resources in that way elevated the authority of principle as against the principle of authority. The individual takes the whole social field for his area of choice, because he is no longer leaving it to blind chance.

For the student of politics these observations may not appear particularly original. But for a self-educated man, who for six years has shouldered the enormous day-to-day administrative burdens of a senior Cabinet member, they are, to say the least, unusual. Certainly no other active Labour politician has exhibited such a firm grasp of the theory and practice of radical politics.

Through the *Tribune* and by a series of brilliant speeches in and outside the House of Commons, this man has built up a redoubtable political reputation. Today he is an even more controversial figure than Winston Churchill. Indeed, the two men have a good deal in common. Both have been rebels in their own party. Both are masters of oratory and of invective. Churchill once described Bevan as "this merchant of discourtesy." Bevan, who was never afraid of criticizing Churchill, even during the war, once infuriated the old warrior by declaring that his attitude to a frontal assault on Europe was "like an old man approaching a young bride—fascinated, sluggish and apprehensive."

There is an even more extraordinary parallel between Bevan and that other "Welsh wizard" of politics—Lloyd-George. It has long been apparent that Bevan models his career and political tactics on those of the former great Liberal leader.

What, then, prevented this turbulent Celt from stepping immediately into the shoes of Ernest Bevin? In the first place, unlike Bevin, he has had very little influence with the labor unions. On the contrary, his flamboyant radicalism has often caused them to distrust him. Another disadvantage is his comparative isolation in the Parliamentary Labour Party. Bevan is something of a lone wolf. He has innumerable admirers but comparatively few close friends. His brilliance and his large ambitions (of which he makes no secret) are enough to make him suspect. Labour MPs still remember the havoc which Ramsay MacDonald wrought on the party's fortunes in 1931. They still prefer a good committee chairman to a dynamic personal leader.

**Bevan does not** understand this. He is not a good committee man and he has made no secret of his dislike for some of his Cabinet colleagues. That is his greatest weakness. He will tolerate no rivals. With Attlee a sick man and Morrison preoccupied at the Foreign Office he may succeed in his purpose. The price of success, however, might very easily be a major split in the Labour Party. Just as Lloyd-George broke up the Liberals, and as many people believe ultimately destroyed them as a political force, so Aneurin Bevan may do irreparable harm to the socialist movement.

That is the danger and no doubt he is aware of it. He must know, too, that he is old enough and experienced enough to be the political match for any other socialist leader—with the single exception of Herbert Morrison. But at 53 he has the supreme advantage of being 10 years younger than Morrison. He can afford to wait. He can afford to see Labour lose the next election. In fact, if the government can be brought down in a way that leaves Bevan clear of the blame, that may be in his interest. In opposition, the Labour Party will avoid responsibility for coming hardships and can revert to promises. In opposition, Bevan may move into first place when Labour's turn to govern comes again. Bevan's genius lies in opposition. The dynamics of opposition may carry the Labour Party toward the leftist, nationalist position that he speaks for. And, in opposition, the present leaders will die off without the opportunity to advance over Bevan younger and more conciliatory men. In opposition, Bevan believes time is on his side. If he plays his cards carefully, if he chooses his friends wisely, the future may still be bright for him.

The stakes are high, but such is Aneurin Bevan's mercurial and impetuous disposition, and such is the strength of the party machine which he has antagonized, that the chances are equally great that his resignation will wreck his own political career and destroy the hopes of the British socialist movement for years to come.

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# PUBLIC-RELATIONS GOON SQUAD

by Harry Conn

THE IMPORTED, high-powered, high-priced public-relations package, so alarmingly successful in the field of politics and medicine, is now being applied in all its sordidness to the field of labor relations.

At least one major Southern textile mill—Dan River at Danville, Va.—is utilizing the smooth, smear-pressure technique to combat its striking workers in a program they have imported from the outside. They hope to create the psychological fear among the workers which Whitaker and Baxter, employed by the American Medical Association, created against National Health Insurance. And they are trying to smear the union just as Jon Jonkel smeared former Maryland Sen. Millard Tydings. This is strike-breaking, 1951.

The blackjack and the hired goon, the blacklist and the labor spy have long since faded away as union-busting weapons. In their place are the suave, refined smart boys, sitting in plush New York offices and well-schooled in the finer points of industrial and public relations, who swing adroitly through top-level maneuverings to sell and ship their packaged programs. Fisher and Rudge Inc. are the big business of the profession.

This firm's proverbial guns were neatly notched last year following its success at bloody, terror-stricken Morristown, Tenn. Now Fisher and Rudge are concentrating their full firepower on the 8,000 striking members of the CIO-Textile Workers Union of A.nerica at Dan River. The attack is a carefully conceived plan of psychological strike-breaking with all the force of high-priced public relations.

Austin Fisher, 40, an industrial engineer, and Fred Rudge, 39, a public-relations specialist, had been separately advising various manufacturers, particularly in the South, on the fine points of their trade. Last year they teamed up to establish a richly polished office at 250 Park Avenue, complete with heavy carpeting, deeply upholstered chairs and walls decorated with pleasant hunting and yachting scenes. On their staff are a consulting psychologist and a former UAW-CIO regional director.

Fisher and Rudge offer many specialized services to their clients. Their special studies and surveys, their time studies and other advices are of high calibre. They submit a brochure to prospective customers illustrating the many benefits which they offer management. Strike-breaking is not listed among these. Approximately 60 firms over the country are now enjoying F-R counsel, among them General Electric, Champion Sparkplug, Lever Brothers, Bristol-Meyers, American Metal Company and US Tobacco.

Fisher and Rudge inform prospective clients of their excellent repute and intimate relationship not only with business clients but with various labor organizations and union leaders over the country. They proudly proffer as references the CIO-United Automobile Workers, the independent United Electrical Workers, the CIO-United Steel Workers, the AFL-Teamsters, and startling enough, the CIO-Textile Workers with whom they are currently doing battle at Dan River.

The Fisher and Rudge program calls for a deft handling of labor relations in which management can ease the contractual needle of their liking into labor without the union feeling any pain whatsoever. They take pride in the way they hold labor's hand during the show. It has worked many times, but many times it hasn't. The International Union of Electrical Workers, CIO, have taken the strike route against General Electric, a notoriously uncompromising company in negotiations. Other unions have done the same with other F-R client companies. However, the Textile Workers, which Fisher and Rudge list as a source of recommendations, have felt the real sting.

**Several years ago,** the plant of Fisher and Rudge client American Thread at Dalton, Georgia, was the scene of one of the worst terroristic campaigns in current labor history in a walk-out of textile workers. It featured armed scabs and the kidnapping and beating of a CIO woman organizer, Edna Martin. Last year, at Morristown the public-relations men masterminded the Enka Corporation's tactics in a strike of 700 TWUA members. This strike, the scene of bloody, open gunplay, monopolized the nation's news columns for weeks.

Fisher and Rudge inform their clients that they work toward labor peace. However, "even in tense situations in which strikes threaten or actually occur," their official brochure explains, "unions have found our advice and procedures such as to lead to greater mutual understanding and constructive labor peace."

During the Morristown strike Fisher and Rudge perfected their fine art of psychological strike-breaking. Their streamlined technique of scab recruiting and creating fear among union members provoked violence which rang through the Tennessee hills but was effective. The Morristown job was a ruthless exploitation of many of the unprincipled devices which anti-union em-

Harry Conn has worked in the political and education divisions of the CIO-Textile Workers Union. He is now free lancing in Washington, D. C.

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ployers had perfected over the years. But, it had the new, imported 1951 embellishments. The strike was broken. The Fisher and Rudge formula met its test. The public-relations goon squad was now ready for Dan River.

On April 1, the Dan River workers went on strike for wage and cost-of-living increases to equal those previously granted to most of the nation's skilled industrial workers. This walk-out was part of a strike of 40,000 members of the CIO-Textile Workers Union of America from 50 plants, scattered over five Southern states. Mill workers are asking for a 12-percent increase, a cost-of-living clause in their contract and pensions, not an unreasonable request in light of the fact that their present hourly average of $1.21 an hour is 35 cents less than the hourly wage for all US industries.

Dan River, the hub of the strike, has long been the bastion of Southern textile unionization. Its contracts normally establish the Southern cotton-textile pattern. If TWUA at Dan River should be crushed, all hopes of organizing the half-million still unorganized Southern textile workers would be indefinitely frustrated.

With insignificant exceptions, the TWUA is rigidly holding its lines in other struck mills, normally key centers but now only fringe operations when compared to the battle of Fisher-Rudge in Southern Virginia.

The F-R formula requires first a large pool of potential scabs. Dan River owners were well aware that the 8,000 TWUA members had a strong, spirited, joint board with able leadership. They could win over some of these members but not many. Fieldcrest Mills, 30 miles away on the North Carolina line, did not try to operate. The thousands of workers at the seven Fieldcrest mills then received personal letters from Dan River, citing their skills and inviting them to come to work. One sawmill in Acton, Va., closed down to provide scabs, and the owner went into the business of scab-recruiting himself, reputedly on a per-head basis. A good proportion of the Dan River supervisors and overseers scoured the countryside for scabs. A deal was made with a used-car agency to provide the cars. Local sawmills and service industries have been stripped of help by the recruiting. Workers were picked up from as far away as Gastonia, Charlotte and South Boston. To avoid interstate transportation of scabs, buses took North Carolina workers to the state line where they walked across and climbed into other buses in Virginia.

The scab pool assured, the psychological aspects of the campaign were brought into play to secure trained hands. Strikes can be broken with unskilled scabs, but mills cannot long afford to operate with them. In the present, partial operation, Dan River is undoubtedly producing more than its share of "unmarketable" goods. It needs most of the 8,000 union members to operate efficiently.

Personal intimidation and pressure are being used to get them back. Foremen or supervisors who had wives on strike were told either to bring them to work or be fired. There are already cases of family break-ups as a result. There is case after case on record of supervisors personally visiting the homes of workers, openly intimidating them; the company just as openly announces that this is not company policy.

Instances of violence are played up to show the irresponsibility of the union. At one point the company brought out fire hoses and stretched them along the fences, manned. Later this was said to be a routine check. Whenever there has been a fracas at any one of the 16 gates, a company photographer has happened to be on hand. Pickets arrested by state police were taken to jail in Chatham, about 30 miles away. New, yellow gate passes were issued, and strikers were told that those who failed to report to work by April 23 would never work at Dan River again. The radio hammered on this date relentlessly, aided by the newspapers and special letters and leaflets. April 23 arrived. The TWUA leaders held their breath, but the union lines held too.

**Union officials** are being singled out for attack and personal smear in the familiar manner of rumor and innuendo. Charles Weber, president of the Virginia state CIO, spending full time in the strike area, was openly blasted as a Communist by the mayor of Danville and the commander of the American Legion, who suggested that he should be run out of town. Weber is an ordained Methodist minister and an avowed anti-Communist.

The Fisher-Rudge formula calls for as much personal smear as the traffic will bear. All available facilities are used to thicken the air of portending menace to each worker and his family. Several times a day company radio programs try to make the striker feel alone, to accentuate his insecurity, to convince him that the strike is already lost and keep impressing him with the fact that available jobs are rapidly running out.

To date, feeding some 25,000 to 30,000 people daily through the largest "grocery store" Danville has ever seen, the TWUA has been relatively successful in maintaining its ranks. It has not been as successful in stopping the importation of scabs.

Textile unionism is facing the supreme test at Dan River. It must beat down the Fisher-Rudge formula if it is to win trade-union security for the Southern mill workers. If it cannot be overcome, high-powered public-relations smear-pressure techniques will have met success in another field.

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# HAROLD L. ICKES: *Nathan Hale and MacArthur*

MANY generations of American youth have known the story of Nathan Hale. They have revered and honored his memory. He is regarded, almost above any other American who has ever lived, as the highest exponent of selflessness and of devotion to country, even unto death. His heroism was particularly distinguished. It was heroism of service, of self-abnegation, of devotion to his country, of willingness to pay the supreme price of life itself in the ignominious form of hanging. If this sincere and devoted patriot had come through the Revolutionary War alive, one cannot conceive of his touring the country to receive the stimulated adulation of the populace. One cannot think of him as willingly lending himself to political partisans seeking political control and pelf for themselves. Least of all can one imagine his ignoring or defying the orders of his military superiors. If he had, fortunately for his country, survived to become a citizen of the newly created United States, it is not to be imagined that he would have appealed to the people over the head of the duly elected President of the United States.

Nathan Hale exemplified the word "loyal." He was loyal to his comrades in arms; he was loyal to his immediate commanding officers; he was loyal to his Commander-in-Chief; he was loyal to his political ideals.

If Nathan Hale were alive today, he would merely be one of a million or more "heroes," many of them self-acclaimed or at least willing to plead "guilty" to the flattering impeachment. The word hero has become disgustingly cheap.

Gen. Douglas MacArthur would do well to disassociate himself from the designation "hero" or "patriot." There is nothing of the hero about this man if the word is supposed to connote selflessness and willingness to sacrifice one's self. Nor can man be a patriot unless he loves his country and zealously supports its authority and interests. No man should be regarded as a hero, especially if he wears the uniform of his country, who is willing to lead those who would destroy the unity of the American people and divide them into contending factions for political purposes. MacArthur and Sen. Robert Taft (R, Ohio) would take half of American strength and resources, if necessary, to throw behind Chiang Kai-shek in waging a war against Communist China, a war that has already been lost overwhelmingly by Chiang Kai-shek and which he can never win, even if we should support him with all of our strength. Others, under President Truman's leadership, would marshal our might and conserve it to defend against Russia, which is the real foe of all that America is and should be.

Whether President Truman is right or wrong, either as a military tactician or as an international politician, can probably only be proved by the event. But there can be no disputing the fact that he is the chosen civilian leader of the country, that he will hold office at least until January 20, 1953, and that, in the meantime, unless our Constitution is to be violated, as MacArthur has deliberately violated all of the principles of his profession, he will be Commander-in-Chief of our armed forces during his term as President.

What would MacArthur have done if, while fighting was in progress in Korea and he was serving as supreme commander, a general had written a letter to a pestiferous and miserable little politician by the name of Joe Martin, taking issue publicly with some policy laid down by him? The answer is simple. Even if such an insubordinate wrecker of morale were a lieutenant-general, he would quickly be relieved of his command and court-martialed.

**The spirit** of Nathan Hale, who was willing to submit to the most disgraceful form of death possible in our civilization, still, thank God, pervades the rank and file, as well as the upper echelons, of the American army. MacArthur's insubordination, his unrebuked defiance of his Commander-in-Chief, his unrequited defiance of all military traditions, his open attempt to make a mock of civic as well as of military virtue, is a bad example for troops and civilians alike. He is said to regard himself as a man of destiny. At times he has seemed to stretch his stature to that of God. Certainly there is nothing to shrink him to earthly proportions when one considers the sacrilegious words of Rep. Dewey Short, the former minister of the Gospel from Missouri, who said, after General MacArthur's speech before Congress: "We heard God speak here today, God in the flesh, the voice of God."

General MacArthur is said to be sure of a place in history. There are times when we Americans can show less common sense and sound judgment than any other people on earth. But whenever we madly shout "Hosanna" to some imitation god, we usually quickly discover the clay feet and, as unobtrusively as possible, slip back into the ranks of those who are loyal to their country and jealous of its reputation for sanity even during a time of hysterical stress that is due to the machinations of our Joe Martins, our Styles Bridges's and our Cains and McCarthys.

HAROLD L. ICKES

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# SPRING BOOK SECTION

## LETTER FROM PARIS: GIDE, SARTRE AND CAFE COMMUNISM

**by Nicola Chiaromonte**

THE FUNERAL HOMAGES paid to André Gide by his colleagues showed a peculiar embarrassment. It was as if nobody were sure exactly who Gide had been. Nobody showed any passion except the Catholic Mauriac, who was obviously disturbed by the tranquillity with which Gide, that "evil pilot of souls," had taken his leave of this world, wholly unrepentant and in fact replete ("*C'est bien, c'est bien . . .*" were his last words). Most of the others looked as if they had trouble focusing their thoughts on the author of *The Counterfeiters*. A great man of letters had died, that was sure enough. But that he had also been a great man, or even a great writer, nobody seemed willing to concede without a reservation of some kind.

At eighty-two, Gide had doubtless outlived his fame and influence. That, however, does not completely explain the puzzled looks around his deathbed. What escaped his contemporaries was the exact meaning of Gide's insistent retreat into himself, the way he had of caring for the world, and even literature, so much and no more, always withdrawing at the crucial moment, like a guest who interrupts a conversation he has himself started, getting up and leaving with many apologies but no explanation. Such was the style of Gide's pursuit of happiness. But could happiness be that elusive? Could fulfillment be obtained that way? Could such a man have had real contact with the world he so persistently caressed and observed, but at the same time kept at such a distance? The claim to personal happiness, unaccompanied by the clear statement of a belief, is what mystified the intellectuals about Gide. While he was still there, he could be respected and ignored. Dead, he became utterly elusive.

The only unconditional praise Gide received was from the Timon of Athens of French letters, Paul Léautaud, who said nothing about the writer, and testified simply: "I have always had not only a true sympathy, but also a great esteem for André Gide. I still feel that way." Until, quite unexpectedly, Jean-Paul Sartre himself, the philosopher of *engagement*, came out in favor of the moralist of the *acte gratuit*.

**The gesture** was typical of the irrepressible generosity that makes Sartre so captivating. Nobody had dared praise Gide: he, who could well be considered the most anti-Gidian of all living writers, would do it. He did it, naturally enough, by attempting to relate Gide to existentialism. According to Sartre, the one characteristic that remained fundamental in Gide was the consistency with which he lived through the crucial experience of modern times: Nietzsche's "death of God" (which is also the point of departure of Heidegger's and Sartre's philosophical positions). For Sartre, Gide is set apart by the fact that he arrived at the elimination of all religious belief through the trials and errors of sensibility rather than through speculation. "He could, like so many others," Sartre writes, "have relied on concepts, made up his mind when he was twenty on whether he was going to be a believer or an atheist, and stuck from then on to his decision. Instead of which, he made a point of *testing* his relationship to religion. Hence, the living dialectics that led him eventually to atheism is an itinerary that can be retraced after him, but it does not lend itself to an abstract definition. . . . What makes Gide's example unique is the fact that he chose to *become* the truth he was sensing."

In order to praise Gide, Sartre had to leave out that most Gidian of attitudes: the pursuit of happiness through non-commitment. The ex-surrealist Georges Bataille, now editor of the scholarly magazine *Critique*, felt free to face the issue more squarely. It is his levity that Bataille finds characteristic of Gide—the will to remain on the surface of things rather than descend to the level where moral problems become torturing. Anguish, he remarks, was for Gide a synonym for artifice, and artifice the equivalent of falseness, while a certain serene acceptance of contradictions and ambiguities was the mark of spontaneity and truth. "What makes Gide's *Journal* so significant," Bataille writes, "is the fact that in it we find underlined and confessed without gravity the contradictions by which he was able to bring the *art of living* to a subtlety which few people have ever attained."

It is because he was so wary of intellectual rigor, Bataille suggests, and remained to the last impervious to both fanaticism and conformism, that Gide in 1946 could still address to the younger generation such messages as this: "What is the use of looking for new masters? Communism, like Catholicism, demands, or at least advocates, the submission of the mind. If it can be saved at all, the world will be saved by rebels."

**Rebelliousness,** intellectual pliancy and the search for happiness were synonyms to Gide. Today this combination seems naive, if not ludicrous, to most people. Our time demands intellectual rigor and straight choices. Naturalness and spontaneity have become the most problematic of all notions. As for happiness, it is no longer either a "new idea" (as Saint-Just thought it was in his time) or a clear one. The meaning of pleasure might still be fairly evident to a contemporary European, but happiness has become a problem whose solution, whose statement even, has to be postponed until the moment when all the other questions are answered. Which amounts to saying that we live in a world of bleak moralism, a world of tasks, duties and obligations. Exactly the kind of world from which all his life Gide strove to keep away.

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But are today's moral appeals in fact less ambiguous than the ambiguity of Gide? Judging from current literary production, the opposite seems to be the case. When Simone de Beauvoir, in 1947, published her essay "For an Ethics of Ambiguity," her arguments may not have been convincing, but her thesis reflected a real situation.

The most significant example of the difficulties into which contemporary intellectuals run when they attempt to derive ethical conclusions from rigorous conceptual analysis is of course Sartre himself. Under Nazi oppression and during the desolate years that followed the end of the war, Sartre was successful as an intellectual leader mainly because he presented the younger generation with a view of life which, while it omitted any preoccupation with personal happiness, seemed to exalt in the individual a more primary impulse: freedom, the idea that, even in the most extreme situation, even reduced to the condition of a victim, man could be free; that he was, indeed, "condemned to be free."

**Sartre's message** was certainly energetic. In the first place, he seemed to appeal to the individual and his inner resources, beyond all groups, classes and accepted ideologies. In the second place, he himself gave an example of energy by making it plain that he wanted to be an intellectual leader and by assuming the responsibility of interpreting "modern times" for the use of his contemporaries. Finally, Sartre offered a philosophy, but not a credo. There was something of the teacher about him, but very little of the preacher. What he said was that nothing was prescribed between heaven and earth, that no choice was in itself more valid than any other, but that no one could escape the consequences of his own choice. To be fully responsible was the thing.

Considering Sartre's formidable talent, what is surprising is not the success he has had, but that his success and influence have not been greater. Today, while the position of Sartre, the novelist and the playwright, is as strong as ever, Sartre, the philosophical teacher and the public man, finds himself in difficulties. To put it briefly, it looks as if "modern times" had proved tougher than tough Sartre.

**Analyzing Sartre's** philosophy is quite a job. Professor Jean Wahl, who has tried to do it with painstaking care, has not yet gone farther than page 85 of *L'Etre et le Néant*. But setting the philosophy aside, one can consider the moral exhortation that was derived from it. In so far as it was an exhortation to action and responsibility, Sartre's message was supposed to create new perspectives, to arouse new energies, and to withstand the test of events at least in the sense of helping to place contemporary problems in a new light. The fact is that, for all its originality, Sartre's position does not seem to have had much influence on the way people look at the moral and political issues of our time. The reason is probably that his formal intellectual approach, offering a method for analysis and criticism rather than a basis for positive assertions, could not lead to anything but ambiguous conclusions.

A good example of this radical ambiguity is Sartre's famous formula of moral duty: "Man is responsible for his acts to all of humanity." In the context of a philosophical examination, such a proposition might well offer food for reflection. As a piece of advice, it amounts to saying: "The road of moral life is made up of nothing but holes," or, even more cruelly, to a philosophical translation of the judicial warning to the accused: "From now on, everything you say (or do) can be held against you." Which is, after all, exactly what Sartre means by moral teaching: the communication of a sense of utter insecurity (and culpability) out of which is supposed to spring the moral decision to make of one's life an act of gratuitous, and conspicuous, expenditure of energy. Clearly, no particular consequence could be drawn from this kind of philosophical shock treatment.

As for his political ideas, Sartre himself has offered the demonstration that his philosophical views do not lend themselves to any definite political conclusion, except to a refusal of authoritarianism and a generous preference for oppressed people against their oppressors. His first position in politics was slightly pro-Communist, although always critical of Communist methods (and especially of Communist contempt for intellectual values). At the same time, he questioned certain tenets of Marxism. That was when he was struck by a thunderous sequel of excommunications from Moscow and from Rome. These could have marked his official consecration as an intellectual leader; but Sartre refused to take up the challenge. Today, his position is the same as that of a number of left-wing Socialists: he is anti-Stalinist, refuses to take sides in the Cold War and continues to think in terms of a Socialist revolution. Such a position can be justified or criticized in terms of the most traditional doctrines of the French Left, but it has no necessary connection with Sartre's philosophical ideas. That is no reflection on Sartre, the citizen, but one can hardly avoid the impression that the political leader has been defeated by political reality.

In addition to a play about the German Peasant War, *Le Diable et le Bon Dieu*, Sartre is now writing a treatise on man which will be a detailed account of existentialist ethics. Meanwhile, his concern with political themes remains unabated. He has recently written a remarkable preface to Roger Stephane's *Portrait de l'Aventurier*, a book in which

### Gide as Critic

*19 December 1940*

A novelist's imagination or anything that ordinarily constitutes a creator is not generally attributed to me. On the other hand, the critical mind is granted me; according to them, that is my strong point; it is esteemed and many of my judgments of still unclassified works were premonitory, it is recalled. . . . None the less, if, on the subject of this or that new book, I happen not to share the opinion of Peter or Paul, I am the one who rereads the book and wonders whether I am right, not Peter or Paul. – From *The Journals of André Gide*, Volume IV (Alfred A. Knopf).

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T. E. Lawrence and André Malraux are considered as representatives of that most modern type, the intellectual-adventurer. Sartre's essay is a brilliant piece of psychological dialectics, the kind of writing he excels in. The "adventurer" is characterized as a bourgeois individualist who seeks the exaltation of his ego in action, as opposed to the "Communist," a man for whom action means peace of mind through the substitution of the party for the self. The first abolishes moral responsibility; the second eliminates the responsible subject. Both are wrong, Sartre concludes, and a "new synthesis" must be found. The reader, however, must wonder how anybody can be declared wrong on the basis of a "synthesis" that is yet to come.

**"You can say** what you please about them, but you have to admit that Communists are the only optimistic people today. They have a goal in life and they work for it." This sort of argument is still being repeated, especially by intellectuals. Its implications are twofold and somewhat contradictory. The first is that optimism is the unmistakable mark of a genuine accord between ideals and practice; the second is that, to be a Communist, all you need is a certain robust simplemindedness, to be acquired through the removal of intellectual scruples and sophistication. The truth of the matter is that allegiance to Communism today is a complicated feat of mental engineering. It requires both moral ambiguity and intellectual abstruseness.

In literature, an instructive example is offered by the case of Roger Vailland, an ex-surrealist converted to Communism during the Resistance. He is the author of three novels and a play, all successful. A writer of undeniable talent, what makes Vailland sociologically interesting is the fact that he represents an attitude widespread among those young intellectuals who came to the party after the great shift of 1939. Admitting that Communism must be swallowed whole, these people yet fail to see why their affiliation should cut them off from smartness and sophistication. They can toe the party line without feeling like fools, but accepting Aragon's "socialist realism" is too much for them. They try to solve the problem by a strategy that consists of sticking to the letter while playing around with the spirit as much as they can.

Vailland is a real "virtuoso" at this trick. On the face of it, his play "Héloise et Abélard" was a furiously anti-clerical performance. François Mauriac wrote a whole column in the *Figaro* protesting Vailland's blasphemies. But the spectator who kept in mind the author's political affiliation could not help suspecting that the Church of the twelfth century was not the only target of Vailland's anger. It was never certain, however, that the author was really carrying out some kind of undercover opposition to the party. Vailland's Abélard was a kind of bourgeois individualist who revolted in the name of pride and sexual passion, rather than truth. *L'Humanité* could find no ideological fault with the play except an excess of anti-Catholicism.

"This is just fiction," says Vailland in the "warning" that precedes *Drôle de Jeu* ("The Strange Game"), a novel about the Resistance published in 1945. Such a warning approaches heresy, since the first tenet of "socialist realism" requires adherence to historical truth. The book describes the lives of a group of conspirators in 1944. The story moves rapidly, in an atmosphere of danger rather than violence. Sex and drinking play an important part. The hero, Lamballe, is a Gaullist, a sex maniac, a drug addict and an adventurer. Rodrigue, his lieutenant, is a Communist, a good, enthusiastic boy full of admiration for Lamballe's courage and smartness. Lamballe is in the Resistance because he hates the collaborationist bourgeoisie from a strictly individualistic point of view. Rodrigue sees in the struggle against the Nazis a step toward the liberation of the proletariat. Lamballe does not make political sense, but, however irritating and vulgar, he is a character, while Rodrigue, ideologically correct, is no character at all. The Communists are right, but they are awfully dumb, is what Vailland seems to be saying.

One finds the same two characters, and the same juxtaposition of corrupted cleverness and good-natured dullness, in Vailland's latest novel, *Bon Pied Bon Oeil* (a title whose English equivalent could be "Still Going Strong"), a sequel to *Drôle de Jeu*. The book is chiefly remarkable for the portrait of a girl, Antoinette, an impulsive Saint Germain-des-Près character who does all sorts of wrong things and pays for them with a lot of trouble. Communist discipline is the only kind of certainty Roger Vailland considers obtainable in our time. If he were straightforward, his would be simply another case of propaganda literature. But he has talent, and does not want to look like a pious fool. He needs cleverness, rebelliousness, and even doubt, somewhere. Lamballe and Antoinette, his individualistic heroes, take care of that by remaining at a respectful distance from the moral perfection of which they approve.

Vailland's Communism is an intellectual artifice that can be defended only around café tables. What is significant is the fact that its ingredients: egotism masked as self-denial, revolt for the sake of conformism, and the cult of action accompanied by crass hedonism, are the same from which French right-wing intellectuals tried to build the ideology of French fascism. The humble people who are supposed to be the *raison d'être* of Vailland's conviction, do not appear in his novels.

**If, having witnessed** Vailland's performance, one feels nostalgic for that deep current of emotions, ideas and human solidarity which, before the war, justified the assertion *l'intelligence est à gauche*, one should go to that solitary writer, Louis Guilloux. His latest novel, *Le Jeu de Patience*, published a year ago, is undoubtedly among the two or three that will remain of this rather muddy postwar period. This lovingly reconstructed chronicle of life in a small Breton town during the past forty years, exclusively concerned with the histories of humble people, is not only a solid work of art but also a monument to what the socialist ideal really meant in France: not at all an ideology, and much less a "line," but a stubborn sense of friendship. And a "pursuit of happiness."

Nicola Chiaromonte, a free-lance writer now living in France, contributes to "Partisan Review" and the "New Republic."

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# The Importance of Keynes—and the Greatness

**by David Garnett**

R. F. HARROD'S life of Lord Keynes is a book that is extremely difficult to review fairly. It has great and outstanding virtues, irritating mannerisms, lapses in style and taste and minor inaccuracies which appear magnified into major blemishes in the eyes of some of Keynes's intimate friends.

Yet it is a great book. Mr. Harrod has achieved a remarkable balance. In particular he traces the development of Keynes's ideas and never loses sight of his personal life and multifarious occupations. Though an economist himself, writing as the disciple of the greatest British economist since Adam Smith, Mr. Harrod never lets the reader forget that economics was only one of the subjects in which Keynes was passionately interested and on which he left his mark.

THE LIFE OF JOHN MAYNARD KEYNES, by R. F. Harrod (Harcourt, Brace; $7.50).
GATHERING UP THE THREADS, by Florence Ada Keynes (Heffer, Cambridge, England; 12s. 6d.).

Moreover, he has written this amazingly complete biography very fast; and its value is the greater because Keynes is still a vivid memory and a force with much influence on the affairs of the world. Mr. Harrod sets Keynes in his social and intellectual background, which was successively Eton, Cambridge and what, for greater accuracy, I shall call Old Bloomsbury to distinguish it from the "Bloomsbury" often referred to in print. Eton was important, I think, for Keynes because it initiated him into the secrets of life. It gave him a view of a larger, freer, wealthier world than that which he had known in the atmosphere of his academic home in Cambridge. For a picture of that world and of Keynes as a boy, the reader should turn to *Gathering Up the Threads*, by Florence Ada Keynes, his mother. It was a world of high thinking, of learning and of endeavor noble and admirable, but not unmixed with complacency.

At Eton Keynes learned one lesson that was very much to his liking. Plain living is by no means essential to high thinking. As an undergraduate at King's College, Keynes became a disciple of the philosopher G. E. Moore. And there at Cambridge he made those friendships which not only lasted throughout his life but fixed his values. One of the most striking of Keynes's characteristics was the warmth of his love for his friends and the loyalty he felt toward all those to whom he had once given his friendship. The friendships of Cambridge were continued in the new setting of Old Bloomsbury. The chief figures in this social and intellectual group were the Strachey men and Stephen women. That is to say the brothers Lytton, Oliver and James Strachey and their cousin Duncan Grant, and the Stephen sisters, Vanessa Bell and Virginia Woolf, with their husbands Clive and Leonard and their brother Adrian. The most important of the other figures were Roger Fry and Keynes himself.

**Though Mr. Harrod** never forgets that Keynes was only one of a group of remarkable people, he does, in my opinion, convey a false impression by seeming to attribute to Keynes an intellectual primacy among them. He enjoyed no such thing. In his own subjects of economics, finance and to some extent politics he was not usually challenged, but with certain exceptions such as Leonard Woolf, who is a Socialist, the members of Old Bloomsbury were not deeply interested in such subjects. They were painters, writers, critics, and they had no politics or ideological strings attached to their esthetics. Keynes shared their interests in the arts, but in those fields was remarkably modest. He knew, for example, that Duncan Grant was more worth listening to, and others had far more to say, on the subject of painting than he had or ever would have. But his interest in painting was genuine and though it was directly due to his friendship with Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell, he had his own taste in it which was reflected in his wonderful collection of modern pictures.

Similarly in literature he was aware that Virginia Woolf and Lytton Strachey were more accomplished writers than he was. Considering Keynes's extraordinary powers as a writer, his modesty in this respect was astonishing. Because of his position as an economist, his purely literary work has never been recognized, but I am not sure that I do not rank him as the equal of Strachey—purely as a writer.

Mr. Harrod rightly devotes considerable space to the influence of Lytton Strachey on Keynes, an influence due not only to Strachey's intellectual and logical abilities, which were equal to Keynes's, but also to Strachey's passionate conviction and strength of character. All this the biographer fully apprehends, but there is an extraordinary lapse of sensibility in his applying to Strachey the words: "a comic almost, with his weird voice." Such a judgment might not be surprising in a housemaid, but it is strange in a man of Mr. Harrod's experience of the world. Lytton Strachey was a man of great unconscious natural dignity and of aristocratic appearance and distinction. But this lapse is by no means unique. There is an equally lamentable judgment on Lowes Dickinson. One way and another, the book is full of lapses.

**However, to go back** to the question of Keynes's position in Old Bloomsbury. He was not looked up to or regarded in any way as its intellectual leader. This was partly because of a touch of worldliness, partly because his intellectual integrity was a trifle suspect. There was the suspicion in some of our minds that in his heart of hearts Keynes believed that he could eat his cake and have it too. An Irish Member of Parliament once protested that he could not be in two places at once like a bird. Keynes didn't feel any such limitation. His actual opinions and statements were sometimes widely wrong. I remember that he maintained well into 1915 that it was technically impossible for the 1914-18 war to last more than a year. I have heard him state, as a scientific fact, that sound is transmitted by waves in the ether. That statement was made in a high wind and one of the company had to ask him to repeat it!

Like Roger Fry, Keynes was capable

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of maintaining many fantastic propositions, though unlike Fry there were limits; with Fry there were none. Fry could harbor, for short periods, almost any belief. And though they were so different in every other respect, the minds of both Fry and Keynes were alike in that they never grew old. Most men have acquired their beliefs, have established their mental positions, before they are forty, and spend their remaining years in defensive warfare on behalf of them. Keynes and Fry were never satisfied with their mistakes. They pressed on always toward the truth. The outstanding quality of Keynes's mind was not, I think, its profundity or its originality but its tireless activity and speed. The play of his mind was as effortless and graceful as a swallow's flight. Mr. Harrod gives a most admirable description of the unceasing and effortless way in which Keynes worked. About 1936 he was in the habit of spending Monday evening and Tuesday in Cambridge, where his time was partly occupied in teaching, by his work as College Bursar, and by the affairs of the Arts Theatre which he had built and for which his manager was Mr. Higgins:

> At one period there was a routine of luncheon on Tuesday before Keynes caught the 3:15 to London. Talk on Theatre matters proceeded apace. At 3 o'clock a man announced that the car was at the lodge. Keynes then moved about the room selecting bundles of papers, which he put into his pouch. All proceeded in a leisurely manner. Mr. Higgins went with him to the lodge talking, drove to the station talking, and proceeded up the platform, where there was now less than a minute before the train departed, still talking. Higgins watched him settle into his corner; the pouch was opened and before the train departed Keynes was deeply immersed in the study of his documents.

He did sometimes rest. In 1918 he would spend a whole morning on his hands and knees weeding a few square yards of the garden path at Charleston. Not a single weed or root remained in the piece which he had done.

Mr. Harrod describes Keynes's appearance in these words:

> He always had an interesting face. The lips were thick. If one added the inevitable epithet "sensual" that would not convey quite the right impression, for sensual lips are lazy lips. His were highly sensitive and expressive. They came into play to an unusual extent when he spoke, sounding and moderating the words and seeming to give them a thoughtful emphasis. He grew a small moustache which he retained through life. His large dark blue eyes were very beautiful—steady, direct and full of kindness and wisdom.

That is very good and true. The contrast between the lovely eyes and the loose mouth was paralleled in other contrasts. For example, at the dinner table Keynes was often ostentatiously greedy, even when the company did not feel in the mood for greediness. But in the midst of such a display he was capable of suddenly lifting the conversation to a far higher intellectual level than it would have reached in his absence.

It was not only as a talker that Keynes was remarkable, but as a listener. I remember how when I was sometimes trying to explain crudely and awkwardly what I thought, Keynes would listen without checking or interrupting me. He would wait until I had finished before he made his comments.

Mr. Harrod brings out the greatness of Keynes, which is not the same thing as his importance. His greatness was, I think, largely due to his power of analyzing and profiting by his mistakes. His views were therefore always advancing and they had not reached a final stage when he died. Part of his greatness was that he knew there could be no finality. His importance was due to his powers of brilliant exposition which made him the greatest representative that Britain has ever sent to America, and which enabled him to get his economic theories accepted in the world.

**David Garnett, author of "Lady into Fox," "The Sailor's Return" and many other books, was a member of the Old Bloomsbury group.**

## The "Most Eyeful Hoyth" of Finnegans Wake

**by Nathan Halper**

WHEN HE LOOKS at his subject, a writer—any writer—sees a proliferation of patterns. Any grouping of these patterns is itself a pattern. Any pattern offers an insight into any of the others. Any grouping of these insights is itself another insight. If he omits an element, the writer does a violence to the thing he is trying to describe; if he treats all those elements in all their ramifications, he must take hours, days, maybe all eternity. Even then, he is doing a violence. The factors are simultaneous; he shows them as occurring one at a time. He performs a symphony by playing the part of each instrument in succession.

What shall the writer do? How give both the broad, bold outline and the finely worked-out detail? How show a thing in itself, and the same thing in relation to the modulations of the universe? How show his subject on many different levels? How show it from many angles? How show them at one time and with one impact—a single immediate impact? How can a writer play a whole symphony entirely by himself?

That is the problem Joyce tries to solve in *Finnegans Wake*.

To do so, he must first establish a metaphysical basis, and he finds it in the work of two Italian philosophers, Giordano Bruno and Giambattista Vico. He adapts the former's concept of duality; the latter's theory of recurrence. Joyce then takes a man, a typical family man, a husband and a father, named Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker. HCE and his wife are a symbol of duality; HCE and his son are a metaphor for recurrence. Joyce describes the world in terms of this man and his family relationships.

Earwicker is any man. He is Adam, Ibsen, Jesus, Finnegan and Joyce himself. Any father—he is all that acts as father; for example, church and state.

Vico tells us that every state has a similar history. It begins with savage men living in an anarchy of force. They hear God's thunder and, terrified, they band together. Families and cities form. The social relationships then follow an appointed course, arriving finally at an anarchy of thought. After this, the state reverts to an anarchy of force, and the cycle starts again. It is the same, yet slightly different, for it now contains a memory of the previous cycle.

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But what happens to a state is what happens to its members. HCE himself—in all his modulations, in all his ramifications—follows the appointed course. A barbarous young man, he becomes a pater familias: he turns into a burgher. Then, aging, he exists in his anarchy of thought until he is supplanted by his son. By the rude young man who, in turn, becomes a father. The cycle starts again.

It is the father who recurs. His wife is the agent of his recurrence. He is matter, she is motion; he is space, she is time. However, when we come to the duel in each man, the dual in each state, the twins, Shaun and Shem, are a more fitting symbol. Shaun, like the father, stands for the status quo. Shem takes after his mother. A rebel, a creator, he is all that makes for change. Orthodox and heterodox, the brothers dramatize the poles in each man; they mythologize the sides that struggle in each state. Shaun always is the winner. Brother Shem fails and falls. Although he is like his mother, he is also like the father, the supplanted, beaten father.

It is a dreamlike world. In it Earwicker is a symbol representing infinite concepts. Varying, contradictory concepts. At the same time, he is a concept represented by infinite symbols. *That is what happens in a dream.* He is parent and he is child: male and female: Shaun and Shem. These turn into each other—or back into Earwicker. *That is what happens in a dream.* Vico's cycles keep returning. The story has no climax; the story has no plot. An end is a beginning; a beginning is an end; the same thing recurs in numberless variations. It is a hydra story, a tale with infinite heads. Yet, each head—however much it writhes, hisses or grimaces—is only a manifestation, only a modulation, of the same old hydra.

Joyce tells this dreamlike story as if it were a dream. In a dream, any moment means many things at a time. This author uses puns. In a dream, serious matters dress themselves in frivolous garments. The gravest moments, deepest feelings in *Finnegans Wake* hide in a play of words. The pun, incidentally, is a symbol of unity in diversity. But, writing at this length, Joyce needs a host of puns. English, for all its riches, is not equal to the strain that he puts upon it. Using any-every language, he combs all the rooms of knowledge. He opens musty trunks in the attics and the cellars. He even dredges the cesspool. This search has a double purpose. It gets the needed puns; at the same time, it shows that Joyce's book applies to all possible worlds, to every universe of discourse.

A father is a builder. He is like other builders: notably like Finnegan, the bricklayer in the song who, at his own wake, leaped up from the bed, crying that he was not dead.

Finnegan is little Finn, a legendary giant of many incarnations. Thus, like Finnegan, he is an image of recurrence; he is *Finn-again.*

Finn has a *phoenish* (finish). But a phoenix is a symbol of recurrence. A


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wake is a time of mourning; it also is a feast. A waking is a rising. Finnegan leaps from his bed. He yells that he is not dead.

Man raises a wall. He also *razes* a wall. As he builds, he mounts a scaffold. But a scaffold is a symbol of disgrace. Of a Fall. By now, he must have built a thousand and one storeys. How and why did he fall? A misfired brick? A *miss*fired brick? By now there must be a thousand and one stories.

Piling "bildung supra bildung . . . for the livers by the Soanagso," Finnegan is ancient Man, building up his civilization in the fertile river valleys. He is also Joyce—piling *bildung*, education, for the livers, for the *livres*, by the *so-an-so*—James Joyce.

Man constructs a building. It is as high as the Eiffel: as tall as Dublin's Howth. It is of "most eyeful hoyth." Of a most awful height. But, in terms of Joyce himself, this becomes, "Must I feel hurt?" A reference to his ailing vision, his *eye full* of *hurt*. A reference to the pain, the defeats and disappointment out of which he has built the edifice of *Finnegans Wake*. (A book, incidentally, that was written near the Eiffel: a book written about Howth.)

**All, all men** are equal. But, as Orwell tells us, some are more equal than others. Any man is everyman, any man may be a symbol, but some are more efficient. HCE is such a man. Any thing he is, has, says or does, any detail of his life, has been carefully machined so that it is like a gear turning with minimum friction in a maximum of patterns.

HCE is a *man*. Man—as opposed to beast. He also is a man as distinguished from a woman. A man and not a boy. HCE, the basic man, has to be an adult male. Being Joyce, he is Joyce's age while he was writing *Finnegans Wake*. That is, forty to fifty-six. By and large, he is nearer to the latter. Earwicker is England, Rome—the society they engender. Joyce says that these are sterile, that the culture has reached its final stage. Anarchy of thought is turning into anarchy of force. We are waiting for the lightning. We are ready for the thunder. For a cycle to expire and a new one to begin.

HCE is growing old. Finnegan is getting weak. Or, as they say in Dublin, he is "wake." *Finnegans Wake*.

Being weak, he fears his son. HCE, the basic man, has a basic family. Father, mother, daughter, son. Joyce has found it advantageous for the figure of the son to be seen in dual aspect. Therefore: Shaun and Shem. Yet, in a sense, the father has a single son. He always thinks of Shaun. The orthodox, successful brother—that is what he wants to be. Shem is what he tries to hide, to censor and inhibit. Shaun is his hope, but he also is his fear. His power waning, he knows that he is going to be supplanted. He will be succeeded—by the strong, successful son.

HCE owns a pub. In the bar there is a picture of the Charge of Tennyson's Light Brigade. The *light* of the brigade is the *light* of the sun. Sun: a pun for son. When he dreams about this picture, he is dreaming of the future, his fear that he will be supplanted by the charge of his son. He himself was such a son. A parricidal Oedipus, he became Oedipus Rex. Now, in his turn, he has become Adipose Wrecks. When he dreams about the picture, he is dreaming of the past. He is dreaming of his guilt.

There is more than that. A father is authority. Any time that this is breached, the son kills the father. Thus, the dreamer dreams of the end of every cycle. Of the start of every cycle. Of political revolutions, economic revolutions. Of stars that explode and stars that are born. Of James Joyce himself, who destroys the English language. And then re-creates it.

A pub is a public-house: a house of the people. The word *whiskey* is derived from the Gaelic *uisce beatha*, which means "water of life." In the House of the People, the father is a host. He dispenses whiskey—eau de vie, aquavit—the creative water of life. Earwicker is at the bar. Thus, he is on trial. A man of many trials. He is the host: the communion: the totem-god who is destroyed to sustain his sons. But a father is a son. The word *host* means *enemy*. He is thus the hostile son. Both a father and a son, HCE is every man. That is—the host.

The artist is a host, dispensing life-giving waters. He is a man of many trials; from his pain, he constructs his living art. He has two aspects. He is the creative spirit. As such, he is Shem. But he also is the letter, and as such he is Shaun. The artist has two phases. He is the creative father. He also is the son who destroys the stereotypes of a sterile status quo.

**The place** is any place; the place is Dublin. Joyce always wrote about Dublin. This may have been a compulsion, but, if so, he has made a virtue of his necessity. There is no place better suited to the needs of *Finnegans Wake*.

Since the book deals, among other things, with the world that is defined by England and by Rome, it must center upon a town that is identified with both. This calls for Dublin. There are other merits. The dreamer is a Dublin man. He has a Dublin stammer. When he stutters, he repeats, he doubles certain syllables. It is thus a doublin' stammer. A stammer is a sign of guilt. His guilt is connected with copulation and reproduction. His guilt, his stammer, is what doubles the population—a doublin' stammer.

HCE is any man. Most of all, a Dublin man. Dublin is associated with Finn and St. Patrick, Tristram, Swift, Wellington, Bishop Berkeley and Parnell. Also Joyce. (As well as Bloom, himself an early version of Joyce's basic man.) Soldier, statesman and philosopher, saint and sinner, lover, writer, as the city is described, so are all the things they stand for.

Dublin, in addition, has a most appropriate topography. In the north, there is Howth. Peninsula, hill and castle—in any of these forms, Howth is a masculine symbol, while the River Liffey, flowing through the city-middle, is a symbol of the woman, of fruition and of birth. Phoenix Park lies on its banks, the very name a symbol of the cycles that return.

But, as a matter of fact, the pub is in Chapelizod. Nowadays a part of Dublin, Chapelizod was a suburb at the time of Joyce's writing. This gives us a new complex of meanings and implications. No matter where Joyce lived, he thought it a Dublin suburb. Each

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man lives in such a suburb. If Dublin is the world, he is in it—and outside it. This is underlined when Humphrey Earwicker is discovered to be of Scandinavian descent. A Dublin man, he is at home; at the same time, he is a stranger. As for Chapelizod, tradition assigns it to Isolt. It is the Chapel of Isolt, in whose worship Earwicker lives. That becomes evident if we recall the tale of Tristram.

He loves Isolt, his uncle's wife. Feeling guilt, Tristram flies to Brittany. There he meets a younger woman whose name is also Isolt. The uncle, Tristram's guardian, is a symbol of the father. Isolt is the mother, while Tristram is the son. But a son becomes a father. Tristram marries young Isolt. Much younger than her husband, she is a symbol of the daughter. (The story says this union was never consummated.)

Man is Tristram. As a son, he desires to be the father. The mother is a symbol of the latter's royal power. He therefore loves the mother. Aging, he becomes the father. As such, he loves the daughter.

The daughter is his hope. In this, she is like the son. But, unlike his son, she is not a source of fear. She is like the mother. But, unlike the mother, she is still unmarred by guilt. She is his nostalgia. His purification. The mother is a symbol of his quest for outer values, the daughter, of the inner. Boy and man, Tristram always loves Isolt. Man lives—in Chapelizod.

But, in turning to his daughter, he does not escape his fear. The purity of that love is a sign of his age, his weakness, his defeat. He does not escape his guilt. She bears the face the mother wore. His love takes the color of his former guilty love. Trying to transmute his guilt, he discovers a new guilt. A new, yet similar guilt.

The daughter is the patron saint, the symbol, the inspiration, of the father's inner life. Of his dream. Of his art. As he tries to purge himself of his fear and guilt, the father builds a "skyerscape." Skyscraper. Sky-escape. It is of "most eyeful hoyth." But the father's dream and art—James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*—reproduce the fear and guilt of the father's outer world.

**Joyce has tried** to show a subject as a thing in itself, and a thing in relation to the world and its modulations. To do so, he has built a world. One that is many worlds—all of which are concurrent. His book describes this world. In addition, it reflects it. In the one as in the other, the reader sees a unity: a unity that shows itself as a plenum, an abundance of infinitely varied forms in a flux of changeless change. As he looks at this book, the reader sees it from many angles, sees it on many different levels. He gets the same feeling, that congeries of feeling, he gets from the world itself. Once he gets that feeling, he has it on every page, he finds it in every paragraph. *Finnegans Wake* becomes a footnote to every one of its parts. Every phrase is a breach through which the whole universe streams.

That is the peculiar treasure Joyce's book gives to its reader. But this treasure must be earned. Before the reader comes to feel the movement and the texture of the multifarious patterns interlocked within each passage, he must first have a knowledge of what these patterns are. That requires time and thought. A reader may not see why he should take the trouble. This book seems a trackless wild. If he does not choose to read, it is really hard to blame him. Yet, if a reader perseveres, he receives his compensation. Loveliness and wit beguile him. And, in his appointed time, he can see beneath the surface. The confusion separates into strands that reunite into an esthetic whole. He gets something that—if only because it does not try—no other book can give him.

Nathan Halper has written articles on Joyce for magazines and symposia. He is completing a book on the patterns of "Finnegans Wake."

## Saint and Scourge

**by Naomi Lewis**

THE GENIUS of Florence Nightingale (1820-1910), world pioneer in nursing and hospital reform, demands (and perhaps creates) unusual qualities in her biographer. Of guesswork there is little need; of patience, much: few lives of such length, significance and intensity have been so fully documented. Notes to herself of rage, or irony, or despair; diaries, letters, reports and records—the mass of material baffles the imagination. Mrs. Woodham-Smith has compressed it into some 400 pages; even without her admirable biographical manner this would be an achievement.

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE, by Cecil Woodham-Smith (McGraw-Hill; $4.50).

No worse period for women, whatever their class, can have existed in English history. In Florence Nightingale's case, only a few years before she was called (in 1854) to bring order to the Crimean shambles, her parents were still opening her letters, controlling her engagements, forbidding her to receive lessons in mathematics (for which she had a particular gift), frittering her life away in endless trivialities. Her diaries record the torture of having to sit idle while her father read snatches from the daily paper; the further one of *never being alone*. A morbid sense of duty increased her bondage. Ever inspiring devotion, for she was beautiful, witty and passionate, she made herself reject the false escape of marriage.

Once started, however, her course could not be checked. She missed no chance of visiting slums and institutions; at Kaiserwerth, at last, she acquired a training; she was nursing "sick gentlewomen" (mostly worn-out governesses) in Harley Street when she was summoned to the war hospital at Scutari, whose horrors this book records in all their detail. And then, the heroic episode over, she put behind her the excitement of action and took up the dry, unpublic, solitary toil of statistics and organization. Scutari was only a prelude to her vast, constructive work for the welfare of the entire British Army, with its brutalizing conditions and its enormous peacetime death rate; for civilian hospitals; for the Army in India—then all India's health and sanitation; for the workhouse administration and lying-in hospitals everywhere.

The nurse, as we know her today,

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was her most personal creation, the one which bears her name and image. But "nursing," as she remarked, "is the least of the functions into which I have been forced." A semi-invalid when still in her forties, living in heavily guarded seclusion in a London room (known, though, as "the little War Office), she was the acknowledged European expert on matters of health and sanitation. In her youth she had "disgraced" a young cousin by coaching him in mathematics. In her middle life Viceroys and Ministers came to take her orders and draw on her knowledge. For her brilliant, constructive imagination no undertaking was too vast; no detail of it too small. *Reports*, she would scribble again and again, *are not self-executive*. Statistical methods, designs for buildings, hygienic discoveries, administrative arrangements—it is startling to find how little of her work has been, to this day, superseded.

A mid-Victorian of aristocratic temper, she was without snobbery, caring nothing for the class or religion of her nurses (so long as they satisfied her exacting professional requirements) or of her patients, so long as they needed tending. Feminine as she was, she had not a trace of prudery or sex antagonism, meeting men (over the topics, it might be, of drainage systems, obstetrics or prostitution) on equal terms. She was both saint and scourge, sparing the statesmen and writers who were her friends and helpers as little as she spared herself. In any age she would have been outstanding; but she was, after all, affected by the limitations of her own. We do not find her condemning war, of whose squalors she knew so much. She railed against the monstrous pattern of family life (if she had her way, she once declared, no children would ever be brought up by their parents), yet she never completely freed herself from its claims. To what abuses, had she lived today, would she have turned her terrible energies? The question is one for the students of temperament as well as of history. There is material for both in the unsparing record of Victorian life and government that this outstanding biographical work provides.

**Naomi Lewis, English critic and broadcaster for the BBC's "Third Program," writes for the "New Statesman and Nation" and the "Observer" in London.**

## Thoreau: The Private Man

**by Maxwell Geismar**

THE JOURNAL OF HENRY D. THOREAU. Edited by Bradford Torrey and Francis H. Allen. Foreword by Henry Seidel Canby (Houghton Mifflin; 14 vols., $35).

THOREAU: THE QUEST AND THE CLASSICS, by Ethel Seybold (Yale University Press; $3).

THE WALDEN EDITION of Thoreau's journal was published in 1906. It has now been reissued in the same form, but with a prefatory note by Henry Seidel Canby where a solid modern estimate of Thoreau might have aided an admirable publishing venture. Yet this is still the only complete edition of a remarkable nineteenth-century work—an epic of the New England spirit—and the important thing, after all, is that the *Journal* is available.

Thoreau left behind him 39 manuscript volumes of which the largest were found to contain about 100,000 words, and which in print have been reduced to about 6,000 pages of text. He had a short life, confined mainly to Harvard, Concord and Walden Pond; and he made it a point in the *Journal* not to describe what he felt to be temporal or merely circumstantial events. This is the biography of a soul. It opens in the year 1837, when Thoreau was twenty, and in search of a garret. "To be alone I find it necessary to escape the present—I avoid myself."

The *Journal* closed in the year 1861, when Thoreau was forty-four, shortly before he returned to the shelter of his family and his mother's presence for the last time, ill with tuberculosis, shut off from the animals, the plants, the rivers that he loved, and when, being called upon to recant, as it were, in the face of death, he whispered his final comment upon religion: "One world at a time." Emerson, whose manner was reproving in this as in other matters, thought the *Journal* was harmful since it interfered with Thoreau's public career as a writer. But Thoreau was the perfect type of private man, and this was the ideal form for his reflections: a secret history of the mind which tried to approach the truths that the conventions of any period try to suppress.

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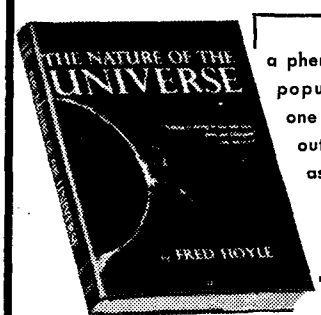


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itself, taken as a whole, is not merely another aspect of the illusions that nature has created in order to protect the processes of life, and Thoreau had taken on the formidable task of appraising the mysteries behind the veil of appearances. He was aware of suffering as a necessary law of existence. "I love to see that Nature is so rife with life that myriads can be afforded to be sacrificed and suffered to prey on one another; that tender organizations can be so serenely squashed out of existence like pulp—tadpoles which herons gobble up, and tortoises and toads run over in the road; and that sometimes it has rained flesh and blood!"

But he contended—and it was perhaps the greatest heresy in his period as well as in ours—that pleasure was the main purpose of life, and he declared that the impression made on a wise man was that of universal innocence. "Poison is not poisonous after all, nor are any wounds fatal." That is the highest ecstasy of the mystic, though this pure soul, seeking a single answer at the brink of Darwinism and during the collapse of a religious framework in American society, was also a student of manners in the middle of the nineteenth century, a historian of farmers and merchants in our small towns, a relentless critic of social institutions, a gossip, a wit. Sometimes the best passages in the *Journal* combine all these elements at once, in an absolutely fresh and personal style that has influenced such diverse modern writers as Hemingway and, curious as it may seem, Dreiser.

**Thoreau lived** his life in a way that he thought worthy of recording in the *Journal*, and it is all there, stored away, treasured, distilled into essences, kept sweet except during the moments, particularly in the later volumes, when his bitterness overwhelmed him and was, as he thought, unworthy of animal creation. For he was also, and perhaps primarily, a writer, as Miss Ethel Seybold's study of the classic influences in his thought and style brings out very clearly; although here Thoreau himself thought it wise to conceal his own purpose and the main occupation of his life.

And that is not to say that the *Journal*,


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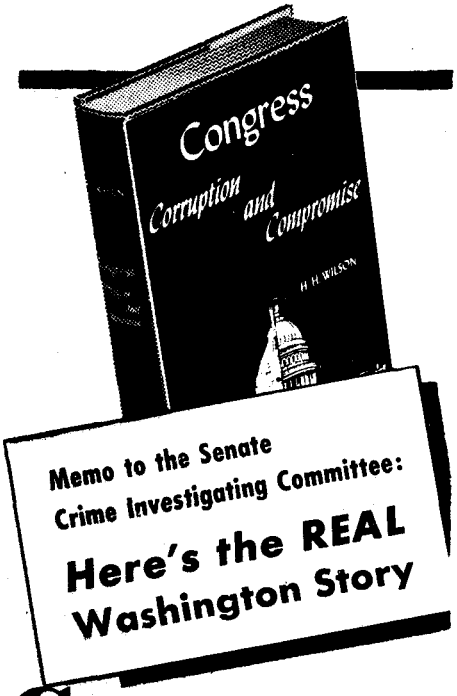


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even so, is a complete record of a temperament. Modern scholarship, while it has raised Thoreau's position to its present high point, has stressed his ambiguous attitude about the sexual drives which, one might think, could hardly have failed to impress this meticulous student of nature's ways. Mr. Canby's biography, in 1939, pointed to Thoreau's curious relationship with Emerson's second wife, Lidian, as a factor in his flight to Walden Pond. Joseph Wood Krutch's recent study alternatively has suggested that Thoreau's sexuality was almost completely repressed from the start. Miss Seybold's present study stresses, though only as a kind of footnote to Cato or Anacreon, Thoreau's nervous breakdown in his middle thirties and his own feeling that what came after this was an Indian summer or second growth. "My spring has been even more backward than nature's," he wrote. "For a month past life has been a thing incredible. None but the kind gods can make me sane."

The later volumes of the *Journal* support this thesis whenever Thoreau stopped looking through nature and merely looked at it. (The intense idealization of John Brown at the end of Thoreau's life may recall the tone of his letters to Mrs. Emerson, and was possibly Thoreau's last desperate attempt to achieve a sincere human relationship.) Perhaps he was primarily a poet of youth and revolt, and the Walden adventure—so innocuous on the surface, so deep and dazzling in its inner consequences—was in this sense a climax to the most fertile period of Thoreau's thought.

For it was a break not only from his family and town life, but from the complete pattern of American society. He had resigned from the nineteenth century, and in this light his gesture of renunciation also marked the break between the life of the rural republic and the ruthless imperialism of the titans of finance. The whole Transcendental movement, indeed, was a kind of flowering of the past in a brief, giddy moment of history before the cataclysm of a new age that opened in the blood of the Civil War. Here, incidentally, Thoreau suggested that the town butcher should become the captain of the Concord militia. For he believed a neighbor's opinion: "There isn't one in the company can cut up a crittur like him."

**Maxwell Geismar is the author of "Writers in Crisis" and "The Last of the Provincials."**

## Stevens in a Minor Key

**by M. L. Rosenthal**

Swatara, Swatara, black river,
Descending, out of the cap of midnight,
Toward the cape at which
You enter the swarthy sea . . .

HAD WE but world enough and time, we would try to prove the assertion that *The Auroras of Autumn* is the most nostalgically philosophical of Wallace Stevens' volumes. The title itself suggests a paradoxical alliance of joy and sorrow, beauty and death (to reduce the unreducible to a crude formula); and the first poem-sequence culminates in much imaginative play around the idea of "an unhappy people in a happy world." This sequence—the key to the book—begins with a poem on the relation of reality to pure idea, and of both to imagination, presenting the elusive, shifting aspects of these associations in the metaphor of a serpent:

THE AURORAS OF AUTUMN, by Wallace Stevens (Knopf; $3).

This is form gulping after formlessness
Skin flashing to wished-for disappearances . . .

Slippery, dangerous, shedding its old skin with each new insight, reality or meaning appears in many lights. Sometimes it seems to imply the existence, at a higher level, of a "master of the maze," a comfortably Platonic guarantor of ultimate happiness and knowledge; at other times it seems decisively to deny any such possibility. Throughout the sequence, and for the rest of the book, there is a rich and complex poetic treatment of these basic motifs.

Readers familiar with Stevens' verse may gather from all this something of the manner in which he is working the

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same vein as before, and something of slightly changed emphasis of this book. The amazing image-making power, the musical skill, the subtle toying with words are as engaging as ever. There are still the offhand precision of phrase ("Wearing hats of angular flick and fleck"), the humorous formulations ("We'll give the week-end to wisdom, to Weisheit, the rabbi"), the self-ironies:

> This day writhes with what? The lecturer
> On This Beautiful World of Ours composes himself
> And hems the planet rose and haws it ripe . . .

But there is now probably more *argument*, with a relative subordination of the other elements. And a harder, darker note runs through the volume, a tragic note like that of the lines quoted at the head of this review. There is a new, less malleable pessimism:

> The day is great and strong—
> But his father was strong, that lies now
> In the poverty of dirt.

There is a bitterness—see "In a Bad Time"—at the sentimental assumption that to imagine an order in nature is to establish it or become part of it. In several pieces, Yeats's early poem "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" is deliberately echoed, quoted, almost parodied as Stevens mercilessly worries at the kind of romantic assumptions it embodies. It is with the savagely passionate older Yeats that Stevens (though his work rarely approaches such intensity) seems to feel most akin.

**Like Yeats,** for instance, he invents his deity. But Stevens' god, "the spectre of the spheres," is contrived in his own image—a proliferator of resemblances and connoisseur of distinctions in experience and definition that would drive a conscientious Rorschach tester haggard to his final rest. He is a pragmatic sort of god, who has created an expanding, unpredictable, impersonal universe so that its endless possibilities of delight and horror can be a challenge to his probing imagination:

> . . . he meditates a whole,
> The full of fortune and the full of fate,
> As if he lived all lives, that he might know.

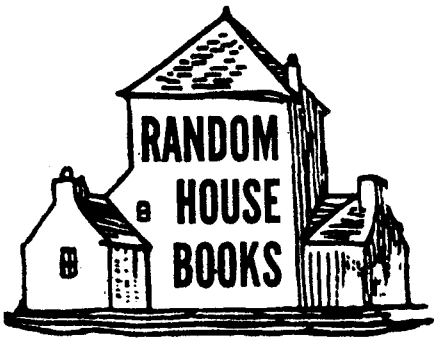
But in contriving such a god, Stevens is managing to kid his own facile curiosity just a little. Thus, he explains the tragic dilemma of mankind as the poet-god's device for balancing off all conceivable meanings so that he can understand them "down to a haggling o wind or weather." Obviously, he could not have gained half so much by arranging "a happy people in a happy world" ("Buffo! a ball, an opera, a bar") or "an unhappy people in an unhappy world" ("too many mirrors for misery"). The old Platonic scale of values was much more dependable than this experimental, fifty-fifty universe. The poet is nostalgic for it, as he is nostalgic for that other frail edifice against things as they really—probably—are: the family of his childhood, with its remembered security, love and innocence:

> Farewell to an idea. . . . The mother's face,
> The purpose of the poem, fills the room.
> They are together, here, and it is warm.

Though a number of these poems have the force of personal memory, none is autobiographical in much detail. Rather they bring into strong emotional focus the pathos and the bravery of man's desire to read something human into the intractable system of nature, that "color of ice and fire and solitude," by seeing it as a progression of ideas or memories or projections of his own needs. Yet the paradoxes of will and fatality are such (and this is another link with Yeats) that the slightest adjustment of the poet's sights can lead to a reversal of this focus. It suddenly becomes possible to defy the too-scientific god of perhaps and probability:

> The meanings are our own—
> It is a text that we shall be needing,
> To be the footing of noon,
> The pillar of midnight,
> That comes from ourselves, neither from knowing
> Nor not knowing, yet free from question,
> Because we wanted it so
> And it had to be.

And it becomes equally possible, in the sad speech of the "angel of reality" that concludes the book, to dissolve once more that mood of courage in the acid of truth's essential "tragic drone." Stevens may not be able to tell us (and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we doubt that he ought to try) where to go from here; but what *here* is, and how good and evil and true and untrue it is, he can help us to discover.

M. L. Rosenthal is a member of the English Department of Washington Square College, New York University. He has written for "Poetry," "Accent" and other publications.

## NOSTALGIA & NIGHTMARE

A GAME OF HIDE-AND-SEEK, by Elizabeth Taylor (Knopf; $3).

DARKNESS AND DAY, by I. Compton-Burnett (Knopf; $3).

IT WOULD be a pity to limit the analysis of adolescence to realists and clinicians. Only a writer of sensibility can deeply fathom the trepidations, joys and bafflements of the young. But the writer of sensibility, when so engaged, must proceed with care; if for one moment he slips into pathos, the game is up. Elizabeth Taylor, in her earlier novels, has given evidence that her sensibilities do not impede her gift of detachment. Her stories move along, propelled by the action of characters seen in the round, although their narrator is continually open to effects of "innerness" and nuance. And Miss Taylor's style, crisp and orderly, does not depend upon any of those incantations and dying falls which have become an affliction of modern "sensitive" prose. In the present book, moreover, she starts out by being fully conscious of the confusion which results when adolescent traits are carried over into adult life: such confusion is her theme.

But soon the reader begins to realize that Miss Taylor has abandoned her initial purpose. She begins to swerve into a state of lingering nostalgia for youth's innocent passion for absolutes; into an atmosphere of pity for youth's ignorant misuse of force, and youth's frequent wrong choices. The more strongly this sympathy operates, the more grotesquely passive her characters become. Although we recognize as probable these post-adolescent lovers who literally do not know how to come in out of the rain and this adolescent young girl, relentless and silently pursuing her obsessions, we feel that too much is being made out of too little. We finish the novel with a relief similar to that which comes at the end of some inhuman dream. But we feel certain that Miss Taylor has only for a time succumbed to a fit of spiritual homesickness; that her recession from the adult into the half-grown world is not permanent.

**The novels** of Ivy Compton-Burnett owe much of their power to the fact that each of them is a nightmare into which we are drawn by degrees but from which we escape with reluctance. For these are high-comedy nightmares. Miss Compton-Burnett belongs to the company of artists who, with the aid of the comic spirit, are able to enlarge life by imposing inexorable patterns on it. Within a strait Victorian world—which escapes being "period" because it lacks any scrap of ornamentation—her three fixed circles revolve: masters, servants and children. And although the members of each circle are vocal to a degree, communication among the groups is largely indirect. Children spy on masters and servants; servants on masters and children; masters on servants, children and one another. Situation is built up by the intrusion of some shocking reality in the masters' world which soon filters, by eavesdropping, into the other two; and the only weapon available to the majority of the masters is the weapon of convention. But natural reactions, suppressed in one quarter, are allowed to the servants and to the young. Thus, humane generosity and simple love are allowed to break through barriers of spite and hypocrisy; and the rigid pattern is at length changed. Sex, in this closed universe, keeps cropping up in terms of comedy. A prevalent background of illegitimacy exists; so that masters are frequently faced with the results of their early "stumbles" in the form of butlers who are their natural sons and housekeepers who are their natural daughters. In the present book, the world of the bastard impinges so closely upon the world of the family that

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one of the masters believes for a time that he has married his own cast-off child. The child's mother (a servant) proves that this is not the case. But for a moment all three circles are menaced; and the one remedy seems to be silence. "Oedipus lost no time in going the full length," someone remarks: "Anything like that would make it very public."

If Miss Taylor, for the moment at least, seems emotionally arrested at the adolescent level, Miss Compton-Burnett is certainly fixed permanently at the emotional level of childhood's most "knowing" and disabused stage. This is a point of fixation which breeds a hostility to life that great gifts of intelligence and style alone can alleviate. Miss Compton-Burnett, in many ways a female Swift of our day, constantly proves her possession of these gifts.

LOUISE BOGAN

## TO COMPARE AND ENJOY

EIGHT UNCOLLECTED TALES OF HENRY JAMES. Edited with an Introduction by Edna Kenton (Rutgers University Press; $4.25).

BETWEEN 1865 and 1876 Henry James published twenty-eight tales. Thirteen of these he later reprinted—in *A Passionate Pilgrim and Other Tales*, *The Madonna of the Future and Other Tales* and *Stories Revived*. The fifteen uncollected tales remained almost unknown in the files of the magazines in which they first appeared until their titles were listed in LeRoy Phillips' *Bibliography of the Writings of Henry James* in 1906. Seven of these fifteen were reprinted by Albert Mordell in *Travelling Companions* (1919); the remaining eight are now gathered in this volume by Edna Kenton, five of them here reprinted for the first time. (Of the three in this volume which have been previously reprinted, one appeared in a small edition in 1918 and is now out of print; one appeared in *American Novels and Stories of Henry James*, edited by F. O. Matthiessen in 1947, and one was reprinted in 1948 in Lionel Edel's *The Ghostly Tales of Henry James.*)

As Miss Kenton points out in her introduction, the fifteen tales that James later rejected in the sense of never reprinting them were probably not dismissed by him because he considered them bad; rather because he was able to handle their themes more fully and adequately later. It can even be said of a number of these rejected stories that their virtues caused their rejection: they contained subjects or attitudes or points of view exciting enough to challenge the maturer James to do something more with them, and having done so, he naturally lost interest in the earlier treatment. The resemblances between the rejected tale and the later consideration of the same or a similar theme are never direct or obvious, but Miss Kenton, who knows her Henry James as well as any critic or scholar now writing, lays her finger on some fascinating parallels and helps us to see the part these early stories played in the maturing of James's technique. She also draws attention, in the suggestive and all too brief third section of her introduction, to the varieties and subtleties in James's use of the first-person narrator in these uncollected tales and compares his methods here to some of the devices he was later to employ with such success.

Miss Kenton's approach to these stories is thus that of the scholarly critic who is interested in the tales as data in a study of James's development. She resolutely refuses to discuss their merits as short stories. "Orthodox literary appraisal is not made of these stories as good or bad. . . . This kind of criticism applied to this kind of early James material is banal and footless, is not worth the labor." She prefers to "look at these stories in another light, that light strong or faint according to the degree of our knowledge of all his work." The tales become "exceedingly interesting" only when one "begins to discern in one and another of them ideas, subjects, themes, even incidents, treated elsewhere much later." To the lay reader and lover of James, however, it might seem that it is the probing for foreshadowings of later work that is "banal and footless" and the assessment of the stories as stories that alone really matters.

At any rate, this belligerent divorce between genetic and evaluative criticism is surely unwarranted. One appreciates

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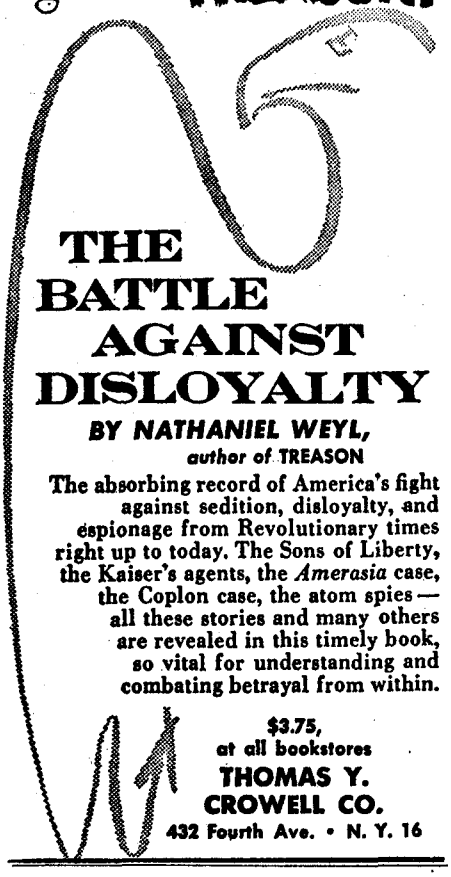

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Miss Kenton's helpful discussion of the relation of these stories to James's later work; but they remain interesting as stories and are certainly worth discussing critically for themselves. They are, in fact—and I give the verdict of one who had not previously read them, and approached them in Miss Kenton's volume prepared for the worst—surprisingly good, in spite of occasional crudities. That brooding observation of the mystery of personality, which was later transmuted into something so much more delicate and oblique, is seen in these tales with fascinating clarity. If "The Story of a Masterpiece" pulls together its researches into character by devices that verge on the mechanically melodramatic—and often in these tales James falls back on melodrama in order to bring his insights forcibly to the attention of the reader—in "Osborne's Revenge," "Crawford's Consistency" and even "The Story of a Year," James's first published tale, written when he was twenty-one, there is a fine assurance in the telling, a firm grasp of those elements of personality which he is presenting to the reader, and a control of tone and movement that is highly impressive. And "Gabrielle de Bergerac," with its strangely evocative precision and its simple, luminous prose style, represents the early James at his very best. These stories are the work of a careful and discriminating artist who already understands the relation between craftsmanship and insight, and whatever deficiencies we may find in them when we compare them with James's later handling of similar themes, they remain interesting and arresting tales that can be presented without apology and read with satisfaction. DAVID DAICHES

**David Daiches, author of the recently published books, "Robert Burns" and "Willa Cather: A Critical Introduction," is chairman of the Division of Literature at Cornell University.**

## CASUALTY LIST

WALK ON THE WATER, by Ralph Leveridge (Farrar, Straus, and Young; $3).

THE WEIGHT OF THE CROSS, by Robert O. Bowen (Knopf; $3.50).

WINE OF VIOLENCE, by Ralph Ingersoll (Farrar, Straus, and Young; $3).

THE NICE AMERICAN, by Gerald Sykes (Creative Age; $3).

OPERATION HEARTBREAK, by Duff Cooper (Viking; $2.50).

THE WAR NOVELS continue to fall into the line of march at such a rate that it begins to appear that every American who wore a uniform also plotted a novel. One day the Great Classification will begin, and graduate students will sort the lot out into Pacific books and Italy books, GI books and officer books.

*Walk on the Water* is one of the Pacific-GI books. It is like a long-drawn-out scream of anguish, and it is distinguished by a homosexual seduction in a foxhole that for sheer scabrousness and loathsome detail is probably unmatched in recent literature. While one can well believe that the writing of this novel had some therapeutic value for its author (who knows what war is like), one wonders what its appeal might be either to those who managed to survive the mess or to those who were not involved but should know by now what happened in the Pacific jungles.

*The Weight of the Cross* has more in common with *Walk on the Water* than the symbolism of the titles. It, too, is concerned with the Pacific war, as it smashed down upon the consciousness of an embittered, twisted man. Robert Bowen's hero is a homicidal sailor who escapes from confinement at the beginning of the war, slogs from Manila toward Bataan, is captured, escapes, is retaken, and gradually rediscovers his common humanity and his particular Catholicism in the brutal routine of a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp.

Bowen writes of hard labor, of exhaustion, of brutality, of slaughter, with a power and vividness reminiscent of Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead*. As an account of the struggle for physical and spiritual survival under the degrading conditions that have come to be a part of modern existence from Manila to Buchenwald to Korea, *The Weight of the Cross* is a compelling and memorable document. But it is as a novel that it asks to be judged, and as a novel it exhibits the weaknesses that vitiate *Walk on the Water*; for, while Bowen is somewhat less a victim of the jejune romanticism that overwhelms Leveridge, his work has the same kind of testamentary quality, substituting statement for development and personal anguish for tragedy. Nothing is implied, everything is revealed with a kind of incoherent autobiographical frankness, so that these novels read more like the summation of an attitude than like the first work of developing artists: now that they have exhausted themselves, what is left for them to write about?

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Claridge's and inside stuff on how the war was organized. Ingersoll is glib with this material, as he is with what is surely the most preposterous plot since the first of the Tarzan books. But it is difficult to understand how one of the country's most prominent editors could use *disinterested* when he means *uninterested*, or *monographed* when he means *monogrammed*, and how in general he could write with such utter disregard for the dignity and beauty of the English language. *Wine of Violence* has as much meaning as a stick of chewing gum — and approximately the same consistency.


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While *The Nice American* is one of the officer books and has a number of distressing resemblances to *Wine of Violence*, it is of a different order. Gerald Sykes is a serious writer and he has applied himself with care and precision to the problem of a sensitive man, temporarily an Army colonel, who must decide between postwar struggle in the United States—rich, brassy, vulgar and uncertain—and an ordered and contemplative existence in Europe. Sykes has chosen to dramatize the dilemma by having two women, American and French, compete for the Colonel, who oscillates between them with the nervous rapidity of a broken compass needle. Unfortunately Mollie, the nice American's ex-wife, is merely a rich bitch straight out of Ralph Ingersoll's dream world, while her French antagonist is utterly without substance.

*The Nice American* is full of acute Jamesian observations on the ambiguity of our attitudes toward European culture, but the hero is pallid, his dilemma is without urgency, and nowhere in the book is there any indication that Sykes possesses the ability to generate tensions and resolve conflicts among people whom we have been made to care about.

*Operation Heartbreak* is a British-officer book, which means that it has nothing in common with the novels mentioned above and should properly be discussed separately. But the contrast is too delightful to pass by. Sir Duff Cooper's Willie Maryngton loves the army with an unrequited passion, and his pathetic little story is told with remarkable economy and sympathy in a deadpan style that is irresistible. "So he had to choose between his love and his regiment. It was a hard choice for him to make." There is even a trick ending, in which Willie finally serves the army which has rebuffed him all his life. What an English movie it will make!

But what would Willie make of the reluctant dragons in the United States Army, as described by our own war novelists? One can only wish that Sir Duff had been asked to do this review: the result might have sur[illegible] his bizarre novel.

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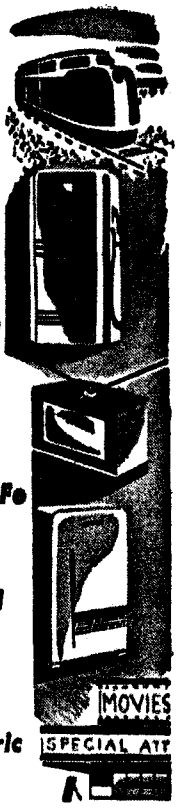


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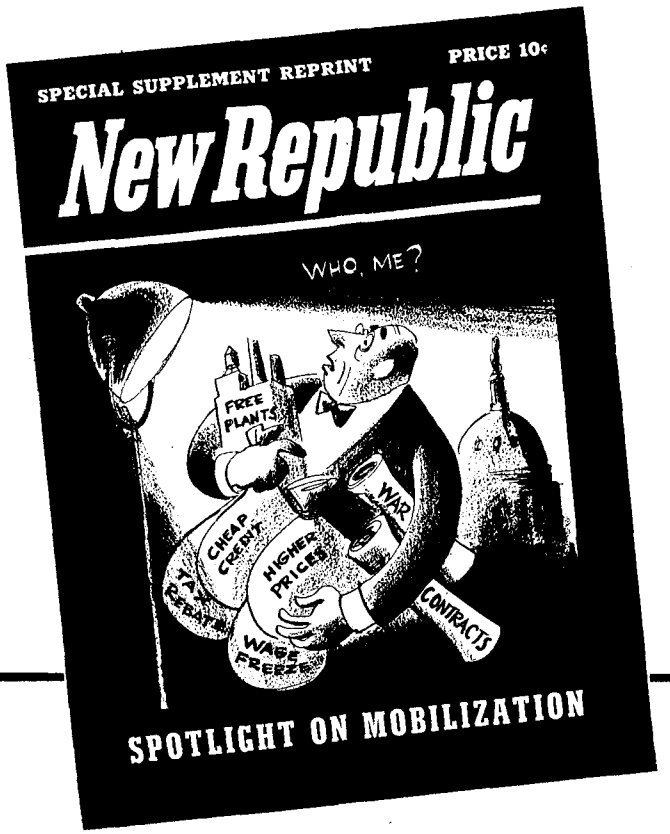


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